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ABSTRACT

This booklet, written for parents of children entering Virginia's public elementary schools, is designed to help parents help their children during this crucial stage of education. Chapter 1, "Starting Elementary School," discusses requirements for children in kindergarten, readiness for kindergarten, preparing children to enter elementary school, children's safety, children's health, communicating with school staff, reporting children's progress to parents, and some facts about elementary schools (funding, grade arrangement, delivery of instruction, school staff, class sizes, evaluation of schools, student conduct, attendance, home education, promotion standards, student records, food services, and school fees). Chapter 2 discusses what children learn in elementary school, including advice on how parents may encourage their children to learn, and a guide to the various subject areas in the instructional program. Chapter 3 describes special programs and services: the library media program, the testing program, the guidance and counseling program, the school psychology program, the school social worker/visiting teacher program, pupil personnel or child study team, career education, health services, programs for gifted students, hospital education programs, homebound instructional services, interagency diagnostic services, remedial programs, and Chapter 1 programs. Chapter 4 discusses how parents may help their elementary school children, describing the characteristics of ages 5 through 10; discussing children's emotional needs; and providing advice on communicating with children, discipline, holding family meetings, helping children succeed in elementary school, getting help when problems arise, and dealing with mistakes. Other Virginia publications in this series are listed. (TE)

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ABOUT THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL YEARS

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES IN VIRGINIA, BOOK 2

CG 022623

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WHY THIS BOOKLET?

Your children are about to start their elementary school education. For them, entering elementary school marks the beginning of 13 years of public school education—years during which they will grow and develop in many ways. As children proceed through elementary, middle, and high school, the education they receive and the experiences they have at school and home will have great impact upon them and their future. The knowledge and skills they acquire, the behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs they develop, and the conclusions they reach about themselves, others, and society throughout these years will help determine the kinds of adults they will become and the types of lives they will lead as adults.

Children's elementary school years are particularly important. What they learn and how they learn during these formative years serve as the foundation for learning in middle school, high school, and beyond. Parents have the greatest influence upon children during this period. For this reason, parents are of prime importance to children's success in learning and to their healthy social, emotional, and physical development during the elementary school years.

WHAT IS IN THIS BOOKLET?

About The Elementary School Years Book 2 has been written for parents of children entering Virginia's public elementary schools. It is designed to help parents help their children during this crucial stage of education. Among the many topics discussed in the booklet are the following:

- How to prepare children for entering school successfully
- How to communicate effectively with school staff
- The elementary school program
- Special programs and services
- What parents may expect children to learn
- School staff
- Child development
- How to help children succeed in school
- Constructive childrearing methods
- How to get help if problems arise

HOW SHOULD PARENTS USE THIS BOOKLET?

Please read **About The Elementary School Years** thoroughly to acquaint yourself with its contents. When you have finished, review those sections about your children's present grade in school and stage of development. Continue to use this booklet as a resource throughout their years in elementary school.

About The Elementary School Years contains much of the information you will need to know about your children's education from kindergarten through grade 5 and what you may do to help during this period. For additional information, talk with your children's principal and teachers. Get to know them and stay in close touch with them. They can answer questions you may have about the topics discussed in this booklet and give you more detailed information about the programs in your children's school. They will welcome the opportunity to plan and work with you for your children's education and success.

ABOUT THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL YEARS

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES IN VIRGINIA, BOOK 2

A PUBLICATION OF
VIRGINIA'S SECRETARY OF EDUCATION
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THE VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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1985

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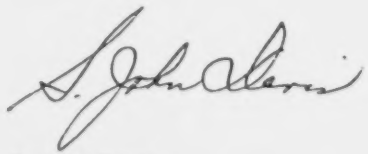
Secretary of Education



S. John Davis
Superintendent of Public Instruction

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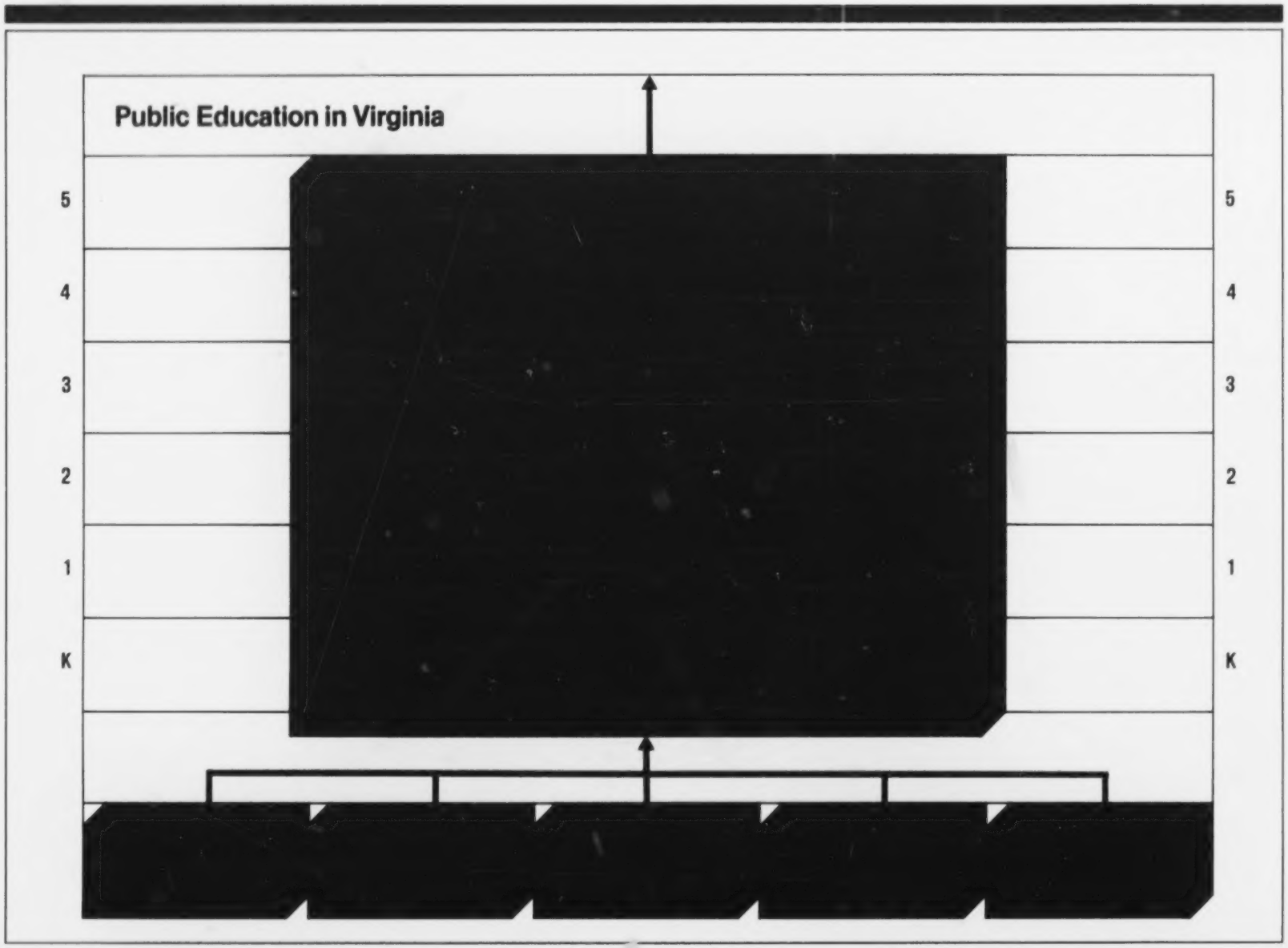
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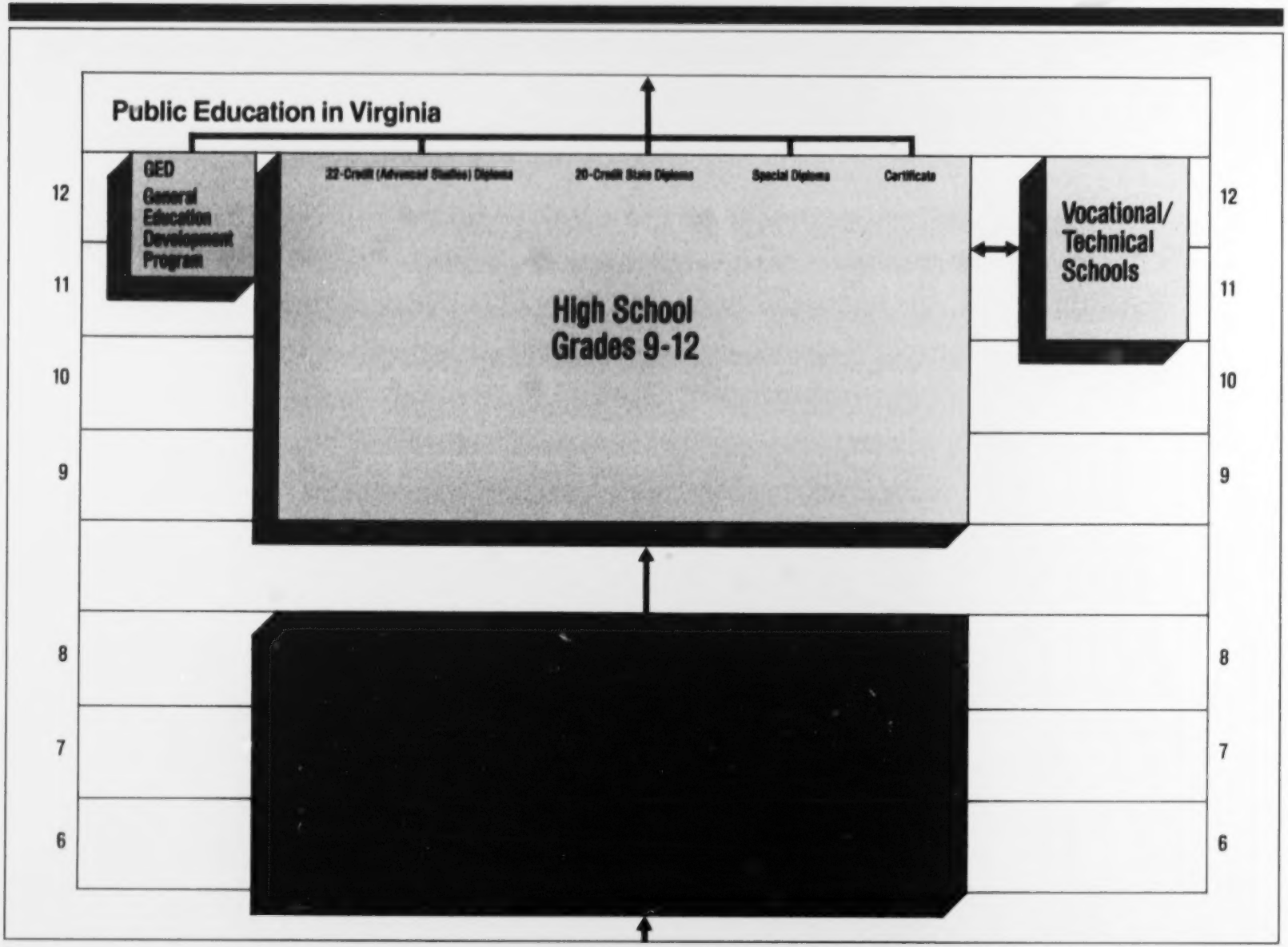
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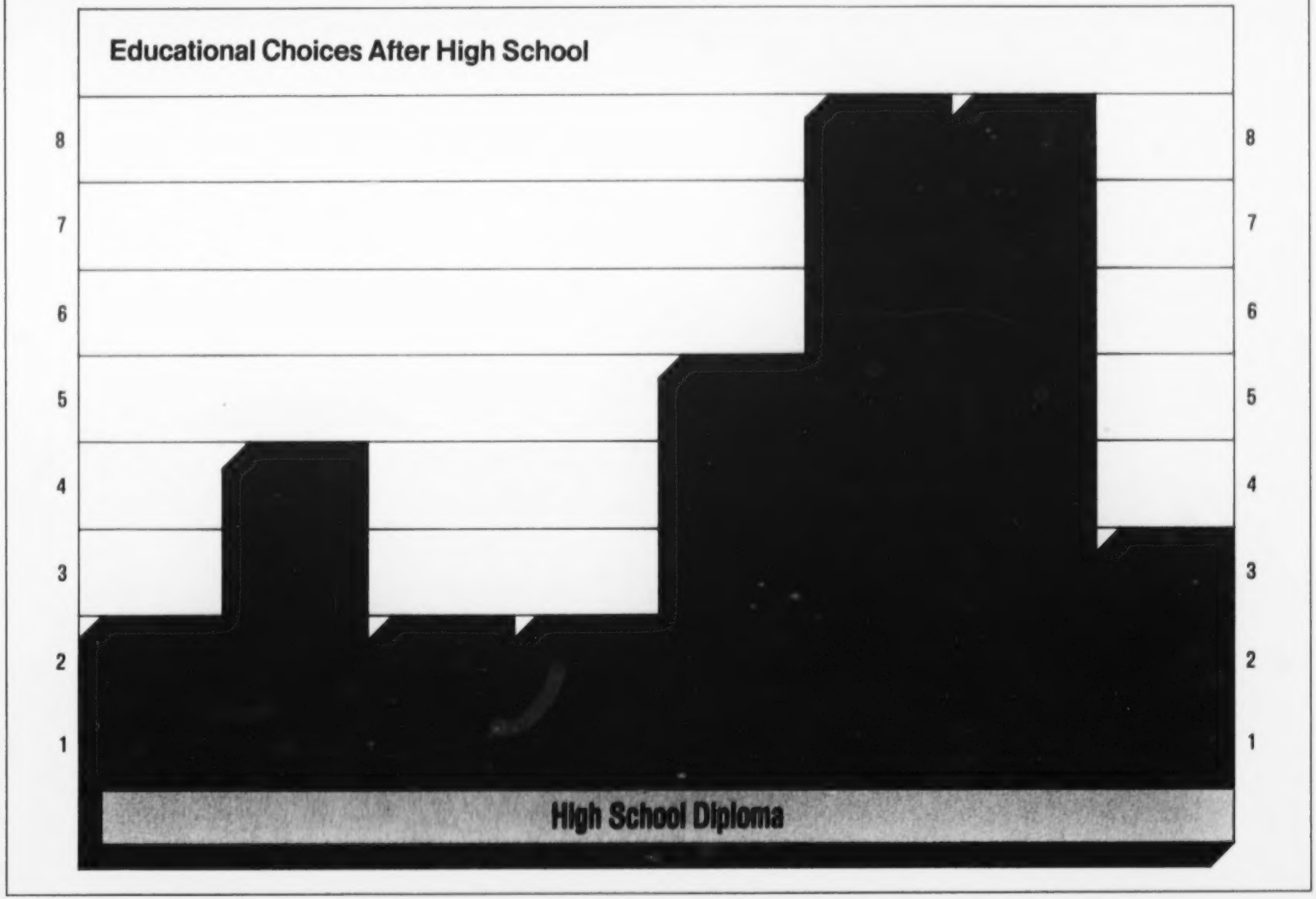
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CHAPTER 1
STARTING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

A PARTNERSHIP FOR EDUCATING OUR CHILDREN

The Commonwealth of Virginia is committed to helping parents provide the best possible education for children. As children start public school, parents and educators become partners in providing the kind of education which will enable them to acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for success in school and for a productive, satisfying life in the years beyond. The mutual goal is to help children learn and develop to their fullest capacity.

ENROLLING CHILDREN IN KINDERGARTEN

The dates for registering children for school are decided by each school division. Usually, there are pre-registration days in the spring as well as registration days close to the time school opens in the fall. The requirements affecting children's ages and health records for enrollment in school, however, are established by the state and must be followed in all school divisions.

The following sections explain these age and health requirements. You may contact the principal of the elementary school your children will attend or the office of the superintendent of your school division if you need more information about registration for school.

Entrance Age The age requirements for entering kindergarten in the public schools of Virginia for the 1985-86 school year are as follows:

Children 5 years old by September 30, 1985	May be enrolled; if parents decide to wait a year, they must notify the school.
Children 5 years old after September 30, 1985, and on or before December 31, 1985	May be enrolled after parent counseling by school; parents who delay enrollment for another year do not have to notify the school.
Children 6 years old by December 31, 1985	*Must be enrolled in school.

As shown on the chart of age requirements for kindergarten enrollment in 1985-86, parents of children whose fifth birthday is after September 30, 1985, and on or before December 31, 1985, must meet for counseling with school personnel prior to enrolling their children in school. The purpose of this counseling is to decide whether these children are ready for school. Generally, the following matters are considered and discussed in these meetings:

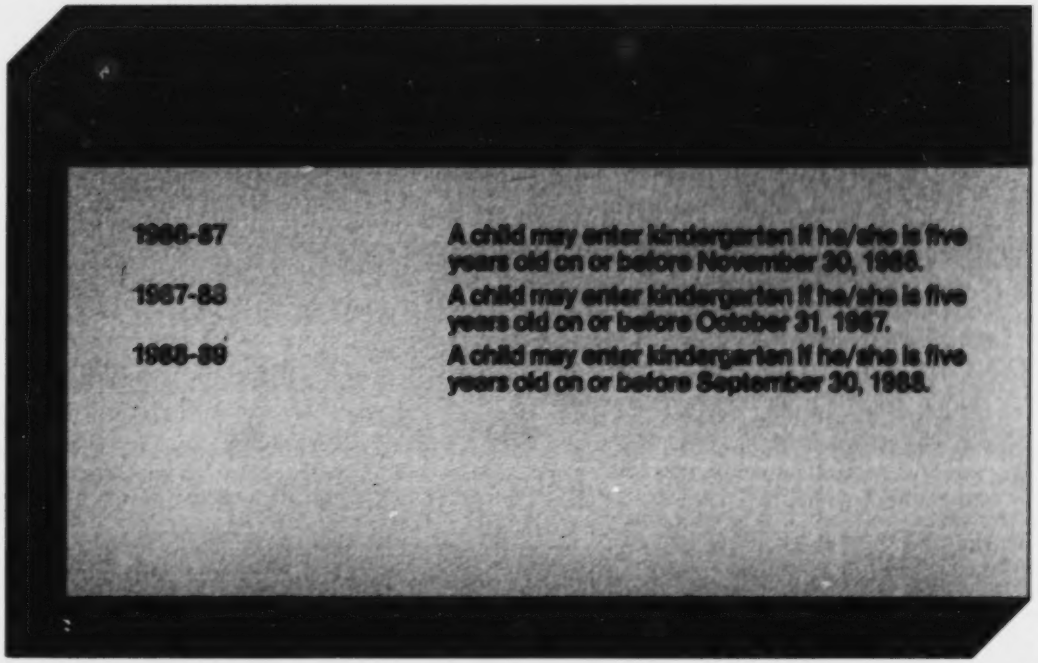
- The abilities children need for success in school (See Readiness for Kindergarten, page 4-6, in this booklet.)
- What will be expected of the child if he or she is enrolled
- The advantages and disadvantages of the child beginning school this year
- The grade in which the child will be placed if enrollment is postponed until the following school year
- How parents may help children who wait until the following year to begin school

Parents whose children do not yet seem mature enough for school will be advised to delay enrolling them for a year. The dates and times for these counseling sessions for parents generally appear in local newspapers and are announced by radio and television

stations. Announcements also may be sent to parents by the schools. You may contact your elementary school principal or the office of the superintendent of your school division for more information about these sessions.

Beginning in the *1986-87* school year, the age requirements for entering kindergarten will vary each school year for a three-year period. These requirements are as follows:

From 1989 onward, children must be five years old on or before September 30, to enter kindergarten. Parents of children whose birthdays are in October, November, and December may request that their children enter school. In such cases children will be tested to decide if they are ready for school. The test or tests used for this purpose will be designated by the Virginia Board of Education and will be given by local school personnel. The division superintendent will decide whether these children will be enrolled in school or will have to wait a year.


1986-87
A child may enter kindergarten if he/she is five years old on or before November 30, 1986.
1987-88
A child may enter kindergarten if he/she is five years old on or before October 31, 1987.
1988-89
A child may enter kindergarten if he/she is five years old on or before September 30, 1988.

RECORDS REQUIRED FOR ENROLLING CHILDREN IN SCHOOL

Certificate of Birth Before children are enrolled in public school in Virginia, parents or guardians must show their children's birth certificates or other acceptable documents. Birth certificates for children born in Virginia may be obtained by applying to the following:

Bureau of Vital Records
Virginia State Health Department
P.O. Box 1000
Richmond, Virginia 23208

The application for a birth certificate must include the child's name, date and place of birth, and the full name of the mother, including her maiden name. A check or money order in the amount of $3.00 must accompany the application. Cash or stamps are not acceptable. Birth certificates for children born in Virginia may be obtained in person by applying to:

Bureau of Vital Records
Virginia State Health Department
Second Floor, Madison Building
109 Governor Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Birth certificates for children born outside of Virginia may be obtained by contacting the Bureau of Vital Statistics in the state where they were born.

Report of Physical Examination Virginia law requires that, in order for children to be admitted to school for the first time, a report

of a complete physical examination from a licensed physician, or records which show that such a report is available must be presented. This physical examination must be given within the year before the child enters school. Parents who do not have a physician for their children may contact their local health department to arrange for an examination. If, as a result of the examination, the physician makes recommendations about health care for children, parents should follow that advice because good health contributes to children's learning and well-being in school.

Immunization Certificate Before children are admitted to school for the first time, they must be successfully immunized against the following communicable diseases:

- Diphtheria
- Tetanus
- Pertussis (whooping cough) (Before the age of one year)
- Poliomyelitis
- Measles (rubeola)
- German measles (rubella)
- Mumps (Before the age of two years)

Parents are required to submit a certificate from a licensed physician stating the dates on which their children were successfully immunized against each of these diseases. If children have not already been immunized, this must be done before they enter school. In addition, children immunized earlier may need periodic boosters to maintain immunity to certain diseases. For information about immunizations or booster shots, parents should contact their physician or local health department.

Additional Health Information Parents should be prepared to discuss with school personnel any special health needs children may have for which the school will have to make special provisions. For example, medication and your written permission for school personnel to administer it; any handicap that may require special accommodations; and any other information which may be helpful to the school for meeting the health needs of children.

READINESS FOR KINDERGARTEN

Because children mature at different rates, some are ready for school a little earlier or later than others of the same age. Parents sometimes have difficulty deciding whether or not to enroll children in kindergarten before the age at which they are required to attend school. The following is a list which describes important characteristics and abilities needed by five-year-olds to get along well in school. *Before enrolling children, parents should carefully consider whether the majority of these characteristics and abilities are true of their children most of the time.*

If your children show *most* of these characteristics and abilities *most* of the time, they are probably ready for school. However, if they do not show most of these characteristics and abilities *most of the time,* the decision to delay entering them in school may be advisable. Entering children in school at the right time in their development increases the likelihood of their succeeding in their studies and enjoying school. The principals at the elementary schools your children will attend can help you determine the best time for your children to start school. They will also offer suggestions you may use to help your children prepare for and do well in school.

- ☐ Enjoys being with others
- ☐ Is able to follow simple rules for getting along with others
- ☐ Is able to take turns and cooperate in a group
- ☐ Is able to share an adult's attention with other children
- ☐ Is able to stay in an activity 15 or 20 minutes
- ☐ Understands and observes the property rights of others
- ☐ Feels comfortable being away from parent or child care provider for short periods
- ☐ Is able to cope with minor disappointments
- ☐ Can follow a short sequence of simple directions
- ☐ Is able to express self clearly in speaking
- ☐ Is able to tell own full name, address, and telephone number
- ☐ Asks questions to get information
- ☐ Understands simple ideas, such as big and small, up and down, above and below
- ☐ Can tell how common objects are used
- ☐ Understands some number ideas, such as one hat and two crayons

- ☐ Is able to tell about own experiences
- ☐ Enjoys listening to stories
- ☐ Is able to identify objects which have particular uses, such as things to wear, things to eat
- ☐ Discusses stories told or television programs viewed
- ☐ Identifies familiar objects at home
- ☐ Identifies some colors
- ☐ Identifies sounds in own environment, such as a dog barking or a horn blowing
- ☐ Takes care of personal property
- ☐ Feeds self using fork and spoon
- ☐ Uses the toilet without assistance from others
- ☐ Is able to put on a coat without help
- ☐ Sits still for brief periods of time
- ☐ Puts away toys when asked
- ☐ Draws simple figures
- ☐ Is able to copy a circle and a square
- ☐ Is able to hop on one foot two or more times in a row
- ☐ Is able to catch a large bounced ball
- ☐ Is able to run and stop on a signal

PREPARING CHILDREN TO ENTER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Some children have attended nursery schools or day care centers and have had experience being away from home with teachers and other children. For others, going to elementary school may be the first time they are away from home consistently. Most young children look forward to starting school, but, at the same time, often feel anxious about what may lie ahead.

Your children's teachers are aware of these feelings and will help them get acquainted and feel comfortable in school. Nevertheless, parents should prepare children for entering and adapting successfully to school. The following are some suggestions for helping children enter and adapt to school.

- Talk with your children about school, what they will learn, the friends they will make, and what they may expect. Discuss what the school day will be like. Talk about learning as an exciting and enjoyable activity.
- Take your children on a visit to the school they will attend so they may see what it is like. Visit the kindergarten classes and show them the cafeteria, library, playground, restrooms, and other areas of the school.
- Have your children meet the principal, kindergarten teachers, and counselor.
- Play games with your children about being in school.

- Read stories to them about children in school. You may ask your local librarian for help in selecting these stories.
- Explain some of the rules they will be expected to follow in school.
- Encourage your children to draw or paint pictures about themselves attending school. Ask them to explain these pictures to you and to describe how they feel about going to school. Respond with understanding to their feelings about starting school, and answer questions they may have.
- Use puppets with your children so they may dramatize how they feel about starting school. Discuss with them any negative feelings or fears they may have about school; assure them that such feelings are natural and will disappear soon after they start school. Help them to see school as an enjoyable experience.

- Help your children to accept others who are different from them, such as people of different cultures, races, and religions as well as those with handicaps. Learning to accept others will help them get along better in school.
- Through play activities teach them how to get ready for school on time. Part of this play might include choosing and laying out school clothes before going to bed at night.
- If your children must go to some place other than home at the end of the school day, make sure that they understand this. Before school opens, provide opportunities for them to become accustomed to this setting and the people there.

CHILDREN'S SAFETY

Teachers, principals, and other school personnel place the safety and well-being of children above other considerations and emphasize good safety habits in working with them. Even after children start school, however, parents have primary responsibility for helping children learn and use good safety rules.

Whether they will walk or ride, children about to begin school should be taught by their parents how to get to and from school safely. In beginning this process, parents should be sure that children know their full names, addresses, telephone numbers, and their parents' names.

Walking To School Safely If your children will be walking to and from school, begin practicing this walk with them several weeks before school opens. Each time you walk the route together, point out landmarks for them to follow so they will not get lost when they walk without you. Also, note the length of time it takes to get to or from school. During these practice walks, teach your children to do the following:

- Walk with one or more other children on the way to and from school.
- Leave home on time to get to school without rushing. Rushing can result in accidents.
- Stay on the route which has been established.
- Observe traffic lights and signs.
- Cross streets only at corners and crosswalks, and look in both directions before crossing.
- Obey all crossing guards and school safety patrol members.
- Wherever possible, walk on the sidewalks.

- Where no sidewalks are available, walk on the left side of the road facing traffic, and as far away from the traffic as possible.
- Walk no more than two abreast on sidewalks and single-file where there are no sidewalks.
- Watch for turning cars and cars coming out of driveways.
- Go directly to school in the morning and directly home after school.
- Do *not* talk with strangers. Never tell a stranger your name, address, or parent's name.
- *Never* get into a car with strangers, no matter what they may say, unless you get your parents' permission.
- Call for help and run away as fast as you can if someone tries to hurt you.

Parents or another responsible adult should walk to and from school with children the first few days of school. This additional practice can help them to develop the safety habits and self-confidence for walking with other children. Then arrange for them to walk with others; a young child walking alone is at risk.

Riding the Bus Safely If your children will be riding the school bus, begin practicing with them several days before school opens how to get to the bus stop and home again, and how to ride the school bus safely. Help them learn the following:

- Leave home on time.
- If possible, walk with other children to the bus stop.
- Go directly to the bus stop on the way to school.

- Do *not* talk with strangers or get into a car with them no matter what they may say.
- While waiting for the bus, stand back from the road and do *not* play in the road.
- Wait for the bus to stop completely before boarding.
- Check traffic in both directions before boarding.
- Cross the street or highway only when the bus driver signals.
- Cross in front of the bus so you can see the driver and the driver can see you.
- Form a single line for boarding and do *not* crowd or push.
- When entering the bus, watch your step and use the handrail.
- Remain seated while riding on the bus.
- Keep head, arms, and hands inside the bus at all times.
- When the bus is moving, do *not* talk to the driver except in an emergency.
- Talk quietly while on the bus. Be especially quiet at railroad crossings.
- Obey the bus driver's instructions immediately.
- Do *not* throw anything out of the bus windows.
- Do *not* damage the bus.
- When arriving at school in the morning or at the bus stop in the afternoon, remain seated until the bus comes to a full stop.
- Walk carefully off the bus, using the handrail and taking one step at a time, and away from the loading zone when arriving at school.
- To cross the road after leaving the bus, walk in front of the bus, never behind it.

- Stop and wait for the driver or safety patrol members to give a signal to cross.
- Check the traffic both ways before crossing the street or highway; do *not* run.
- If possible, walk home from the bus stop with other children.
- Come directly home from the bus stop after school.

The area around the school bus is called the "danger zone" because it is very difficult, or impossible, for the driver to see small children who are close to the bus. The first several days of school, go with your children to the bus stop in the morning and meet them there when they return after school. Be sure to observe their behavior at the bus stop. Talk with them about the safety rules they are using. Within a reasonable time, encourage them to go to and from the bus stop independently with other children.

Car-Pooling Safely Good safety rules are equally necessary when children are car-pooled to school. Drivers should, of course, observe all traffic regulations and drive with caution. They should also learn and obey all regulations established by the school concerning dropping off and picking up children on school property. Routes should be arranged so that children being picked up or dropped off are not required to cross traffic lanes to get to their schools or homes. Children who are car-pooled should be taught the following:

- Stay seated in the car, and wear a seat belt.
- Keep heads, arms, and hands inside the car.
- Speak softly so the driver is not distracted.
- Do *not* throw articles out of car windows.
- Before getting out of the car, wait until the car comes to a full stop and the driver gives permission.
- When getting out of the car at home or at school, use the door nearest the sidewalk.
- Look both ways for traffic before leaving the car.
- Go directly into school or home upon arrival there.

CHILDREN'S HEALTH

Healthy children generally are better able to learn and get along well in school. Parents, therefore, can contribute significantly to children's achievement in school by teaching them good health habits, providing appropriate medical and dental care, and maintaining a family lifestyle conducive to healthy growth and development.

Diet A well-balanced diet is essential to children's health and development. Growing children need to eat three nutritious meals each day, including a substantial breakfast. Their daily diet should consist of a balance of fruits, raw and cooked vegetables, meat, poultry, fish or eggs, milk and milk products, bread, and cereal. Foods high in sugar, such as candy and soft drinks, should be allowed only occasionally. Developing healthy eating habits during childhood sets the pattern for eating habits in later years.

Sleep and Rest Adequate sleep and rest are necessary for good health and learning. Children who do not get enough sleep and rest have difficulty concentrating on their school work, become easily upset and irritable, and are unable to cope well in school. In addition, they are more likely to get sick frequently. Parents should insist that children go to bed every school night at a time which will enable them to get sufficient sleep. Most children require about eight hours of sleep each night. Many young children also need a brief rest during the day.

Exercise Daily exercise is also important for maintaining good health and promoting children's healthy physical and mental development. Furthermore, adequate exercise helps prevent obesity and chronic illness later in life.

COMMUNICATING WITH SCHOOL STAFF

Because a cooperative effort by home and school is the best way to help children learn, school personnel invite parents' involvement in children's education. They realize the importance of parents knowing what children are expected to learn and the progress they are making. They also recognize the value of parents and school staff planning and working together.

Parent-Principal Conferences As the instructional leaders and managers of their schools, principals are responsible for all aspects of the school program. Elementary school principals work closely with students, faculty, and parents to provide educational programs and support services to help each child achieve.

Parents are encouraged to meet with principals to discuss children's progress, the school program, and other school-related matters or concerns. It is advisable for parents to contact their children's principals by note or telephone so a convenient time may be set for conferences.

Parent-Teacher Conferences It is very important for parents and teachers to meet together regularly about children's academic achievement and personal development. Teachers periodically contact parents to request conferences with them. Conversely, parents may ask teachers for such meetings. These conferences provide an opportunity for parents and teachers to share information and plan together for children's education and development.

Parents should be sure to let teachers know about difficulties or problems outside of school which may affect children's achievement or behavior in school. Doing so enables teachers to work more effectively with children and provide additional help and support as needed.

Most elementary schools have several parent-teacher conference days each school year. Parents are notified of the dates in advance and encouraged to come to school to meet with their children's teachers. These conferences provide additional opportunities for parents and teachers to cooperate in helping children learn and grow.

Meeting For Parents In most elementary schools there are various group meetings for parents. These may be large or small groups, depending upon the purposes of the meetings. Speakers, panel presentations, discussions, or films about topics of interest to parents are generally featured to help them learn more about school programs and how parents may help children advance in school. Parents also have the opportunity at these meetings to get better acquainted with the school staff and each other.

REPORTING CHILDREN'S PROGRESS TO PARENTS

Information about children's progress in school is conveyed to parents through a formal reporting system. In many schools this consists of report cards sent home periodically, which describe children's progress in their studies as well as their behavior and attitudes in school. These reports may be in the form of a checklist, a narrative, or a combination of both. In some schools the reporting system consists of periodic teacher-parent conferences in conjunction with a written report to parents.

The grading systems used for reporting students' progress vary among school divisions. S(satisfactory), I(improving), and U(unsatisfactory) are sometimes used to report the progress of children in kindergarten and grades 1 and 2. In upper elementary grades, the letters A, B, C, D, and F are usually used to indicate children's progress in academic subjects, and S, I, and U to signify the quality of student behavior and attitudes. Most teachers also write comments on report cards to provide additional information about children.

Whatever reporting system may be used, parents should bear in mind the importance of periodic, face-to-face discussions with children's teachers. Children are more motivated to learn and achieve when they see clear evidence of their parents' active interest in what they are doing in schoo!

SOME FACTS ABOUT ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

The most recent available enrollment figures show that approximately 413,000 children were enrolled in kindergarten through grade 5 in 1,181 public elementary schools in Virginia. The quality and content of programs and services provided in public schools must meet state standards. In addition, all public school professional personnel are required to meet certification requirements established by the state regarding their education and competencies. These requirements are safeguards designed to ensure high quality education for children.

Public schools in Virginia must provide a minimum of 180 days of instruction each school year and at least five and a half hours of instruction per day, excluding lunch time, in grades 1 through 12. A minimum of three hours of instruction each day is required for kindergarten.

Funding Public education is supported by a combination of state, local, and federal funds. For example, the average cost of educating a student in the Virginia public schools in the 1983-84 school year was $2,805. Of this amount, approximately 45.5 percent was provided by the state, 47.6 percent by the localities, and 6.9 percent by the federal government. This funding formula changes periodically, as state and federal laws and regulations change.

Grade Arrangements Elementary schools differ in the numbers of students enrolled and the range of grade levels included. Many elementary schools have kindergarten through grade 5 or 6, while others include grade 7. In some localities children attend primary schools for kindergarten through grade 3 and intermediate schools for grades 4 through 6. In addition, some school divisions offer Head Start and Early Childhood programs for preschool children.

Delivery of Instruction In the primary grades, kindergarten through grade 3, classroom teachers usually teach children all their subjects. In most elementary schools, students in grades 4 and 5 are also taught all subjects by their classroom teachers. In some schools instruction in these grades is departmentalized, and children move from one classroom to another to work with a different teacher for each subject.

Additional instruction in certain subjects such as art, music, and physical education is usually provided periodically by specialized teachers. Children who need extra help in reading and mathematics also work with remedial teachers who specialize in these subjects.

School Staff Public elementary schools are required by state accreditation standards to have certain professional, clerical, and custodial staff. The number of these persons employed in a school is based upon the number of students enrolled.

Health services must be provided for children who become ill or injured during the school day. The services of school psychologists, school social workers, and visiting teachers should also be available, as needed. In addition, elementary schools are encouraged to employ elementary counselors, wherever possible. In most school divisions, the number of professional staff exceeds the number required by state law.

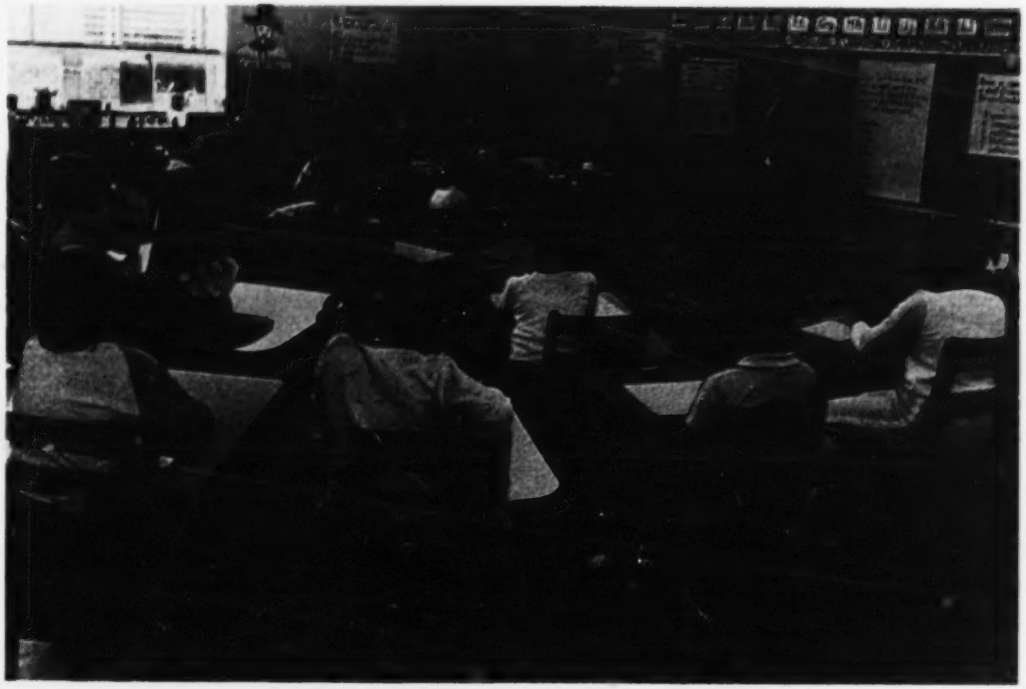
The following staff generally serve in elementary schools:

Principals
Assistant principals

Classroom teachers
Librarians
Specialty area teachers:
art, gifted and talented, music, physical education, reading, remedial, and special education

Counselors (in some schools)
School nurses (in some schools)
School psychologists
School social workers/visiting teachers
Speech and hearing therapists

Bus drivers
Clerical Staff
Custodians
Food service workers



Not all elementary schools have all of these staff members. Parents can find out which staff are employed in the schools their children attend by contacting the principal. Should children experience problems in school that may require the services of any of these staff members, parents should discuss the situation with the principal, who can assist in obtaining the needed services.

Class Sizes The maximum number of students per classroom teacher is established by state law. The maximum number of pupils per classroom teacher for kindergarten through grade 3 may not exceed 30. If there are more than 25 pupils in a kindergarten class, a full-time teacher's aide must be assigned to the class. In grades 4 through 7, the number of pupils per certified teacher may not be greater than 35.

Evaluation of Schools To maintain a high quality of education in the public schools, each school must be evaluated by the Virginia Department of Education every ten years. The evaluation process consists of a self-study by the school staff followed by an on-site evaluation by a visiting committee. Two years later, the school must submit a written progress report to the Department, and within five years after the report an administrative review of programs and services required by law must be conducted. Local school boards are required to review biennially in public sessions how the accreditation standards are being implemented in their divisions. They also must inform the Board of Education of the date this action was taken.

Student Conduct Children learn best in schools which are free from disruption and threat to person and property, and which support individual rights and have an atmosphere conducive to learning. Consequently, standards of student conduct are established by each school division. Usually included in the standards are policies regarding student rights; student attire; damage, theft, or destruction of school property; fighting; respect for other students and school personnel; attendance; behavior on school buses; carrying dangerous weapons; and the use of tobacco, drugs, and alcohol on school property. The consequences to students for disobeying the standards may range from restriction of activities and detention to suspension or expulsion. Parents should become familiar with the standards of their local schools and teach children the behavior expected of them. Copies

of local standards are available from school principals and division superintendents.

Attendance The importance of parents insisting that children attend school regularly cannot be stressed too strongly. By attending school regularly, children are better able to achieve in their studies than those who are frequently absent. They are also more likely to enjoy school and learning and understand that education is important. On the other hand, children who are often absent miss instruction which is essential to their academic progress. Thus, they do not experience the success they should, and, if the pattern of frequent absences continues, in time they tend to place little value on school and education.

Parents should inform the school when children must be absent from school because of illness or injury. Parents also should find out what school work children may do at home and help them with it during the absence. Unless parents have notified the school in advance that children will be absent, public schools are required to make every effort to

contact parents as early as possible when children do not arrive at school. This procedure is followed to assure the safety of children.

Instructional services from homebound and hospital teachers are available when children must be absent from school for extended periods because of illness or injury. Further information about these services is provided in Chapter 3 of this booklet.

Home Education Parents may elect to educate children at home rather than sending them to a public or private school. Home instruction can be provided if one of following criteria is met:

- The parent holds a baccalaureate degree in any subject from an accredited institution of higher education;
- The parent meets the qualifications for a teacher prescribed by the Board of Education;
- The parent enrolls the child or children in a correspondence course approved by the Board of Education; or
- The parent provides a program of study or curriculum which, in the judgment of the division superintendent, includes the Standards of Learning (SOL) objectives adopted by the Board of Education for language arts and mathematics, and provides evidence that the parent is able to provide an adequate education for the child.

Parents who educate their children at home are required to show that the children are making satisfactory progress. They may choose from three options for providing this evidence of achievement:

- The SRA test for reading, language arts, and mathematics administered at school;
- The SRA test administered independently; or
- An alternative assessment which, in the judgment of the division superintendent, shows adequate achievement.

Parents who want further information about home education should contact their division superintendent.

Promotion Standards Each school division sets promotion standards which are used in deciding whether children have gained adequate knowledge and skills to succeed in learning at the next grade level. Ordinarily, most children are able to progress from one grade to the next without interruption, but, occasionally, a child may not be ready to be promoted at the end of a school year. In such cases, teachers, parents, and the principal must decide what is best for the child. Many factors, such as the child's abilities, achievement, and social, physical, and emotional maturity, should be taken into account in making this decision. Options such as tutoring and summer school also should be considered.

Because each child is unique and matures at his or her own pace, some children need additional time and instruction at certain grades before they are ready to proceed to the next grade. Allowing children this additional time when it is needed can help them become better prepared for learning in higher grades and, thus, can be very beneficial for them.

Student Records Starting with the child's entry into public school, a cumulative file of information about the student is maintained. These scholastic records are kept in order to have appropriate and adequate information for planning educational programs and services best suited to the student's individual needs and abilities. Each child's cumulative file contains the following data:

Name and address
Birthdate
Name and address of parents
Scholastic work completed
Level of achievement (grades)
Attendance
Standardized achievement test scores
Results of required group tests and inventories
Health and physical fitness data, including the preschool physical examination report and certificate of immunization

When students attend middle and high school, other information is also included, such as their middle and high school programs of studies, school and community activities, and work experiences.

In addition to these cumulative folders, confidential files are kept for children who are handicapped or gifted and require special programs and/or services. These files contain a variety of information used in designing educational programs and related services most appropriate to their abilities and educational needs.

To safeguard the rights and privacy of children and parents, all student records must be maintained and used according to policies and procedures established by the Board of Education. School principals have overall responsibility for student records, including the collection of data, record maintenance and security, and the disclosure of information from the records. Authorized school personnel, such as counselors and teachers who have access to student records, are required to use the information in them only for the benefit of the students.

Parents or legal guardians have the right to see the information in their children's files until the children are 18 years of age or older, or are enrolled in an institution of postsecondary education. Students 18 years of age or older have access to their own records. Those

who are younger, unless they are emancipated minors or enrolled in an institution of postsecondary education, generally need their parents' or guardians' written consent to see the information in their files. Except in cases of investigation by city or county child protective service agencies, information from students' records is *not* released to third parties without the written consent of their parents or guardians.

If a parent or guardian believes that information in his or her child's record is inaccurate, misleading, or violates the privacy or other rights of the child, the parent or guardian is entitled to a hearing to challenge the information in question. Students 18 years of age or older have this right regarding their own files. Through such hearings corrections can be made.

Parents interested in additional information about student records may talk with the principal of the school their children attend. They may also refer to *Management of the Student's Scholastic Record in the Public Schools of Virginia* (Department of Education, 1983), a copy of which is located in each public school.

Food Services Most elementary schools have cafeterias or lunchrooms where children may purchase lunch or eat lunch they have brought from home. School lunches are planned by dieticians to meet the nutritional needs of growing children. Public schools participate in federal programs that provide breakfast and/or lunch, either free or at reduced prices, to children of families that qualify for the program. Parents may contact the principal for information about these programs.

School Fees While some school divisions provide free textbooks for children, others find it necessary to charge a rental fee. When the textbooks are returned at the end of the school year, the fee is generally returned. Some schools charge a small annual fee for consumable materials such as art materials and workbooks. Generally, rental fees are also charged for the use of musical instruments provided by the school. Parents who have difficulty paying such fees should contact the principal about assistance.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Additional information about any topic discussed in *Some Facts About Elementary Schools* is available from the following:

Superintendent's office in your local school division

Office of Public Information and Publications
Virginia Department of Education
101 North Ninth Street
Richmond, Virginia 23216

CHAPTER 2

WHAT CHILDREN LEARN IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

A DESIRE TO LEARN

Most young children starting school are eager to learn and excited about learning. As they grow older, some become discouraged about their ability to succeed and dislike or become indifferent toward school. Such discouragement or negative feelings toward school hampers learning and often leads to failure or underachievement in school work. Children who retain confidence in themselves and enthusiasm for learning have the greatest chances for success in school and in the years which follow.

HOW PARENTS MAY ENCOURAGE CHILDREN'S INTEREST IN LEARNING

It is very important for parents to help keep alive children's self-confidence and interest in learning. The following are some suggestions parents may use to accomplish this:

- Use encouragement and praise for children's efforts to learn rather than criticism or ridicule.
- Provide a variety of interesting opportunities for learning in which children can be actively involved, such as caring for a pet, participating in scouting or other recreational activities, visiting places of interest such as the zoo or museum, helping to prepare simple meals, and helping to grow a garden.
- Take advantage of children's natural curiosity and interest to help them learn. Answer their questions about the world around them.

- Make learning a source of success and satisfaction for children by providing learning experiences which they are ready to undertake and in which they may be successful most of the time.
- Allow children the right not to be perfect—to make mistakes without feeling they are stupid or worthless. When children make mistakes or fail in their efforts to learn, show them that you understand their feelings. Help them discover new ways to approach the problem or activity, and encourage them to try again.
- Give children help with school work when it is needed. Help them especially to understand the meaning and application of what they are learning. Do *not* do their school work for them; doing so causes them to feel incompetent and always in need of adult assistance.
- If children begin to experience frequent difficulties with school work or seem to resist going to school, find out the causes of the problems by talking with them, their teachers, and counselors. See that immeddiate steps are taken to help resolve these difficulties.
- Let children know you are aware of their hard work and efforts to learn, even when they may not be successful in what they have attempted.
- Have high, but realistic, expectations of children, and encourage them to do their best in school.
- Avoid giving children long-term or very difficult tasks which they are not mature enough to undertake.

- Show children that you are interested in their education by talking with them about their studies and school activities, maintaining close contact with their teachers, and participating in parent activities at school.
- Encourage children to read. Take them to a library regularly, and have appropriate reading materials at home. Help them learn to look for main ideas and the meaning of what they are reading, and discuss with them what they have read.
- Read to your children regularly.
- Help them see reading as an interesting and enjoyable activity by reading frequently yourself.
- Limit the amount of time children spend watching television, and monitor the types of programs they view.
- Help children learn to think and reason. Through the use of enjoyable and interesting activities and situations, help them do the following:
  - Observe events and objects around them
  - Compare different ideas, feelings, and objects
  - Classify objects and activities
  - Look for causes and effects
  - Find out how things work
  - Guess why things happen
  - Give reasons for taking certain actions
  - Make choices and decisions
  - Ask questions
  - Use imagination
  - Plan and organize tasks and activities.
- Take time to explain to children your reasons for having them do things, rather than just telling them what to do.
- Make ordinary family activities, such as going to the supermarket, visiting the park, talking at the dinner table, or cleaning the house, opportunities for thinking and learning.
- Help children expand their knowledge through a variety of experiences such as going on trips, being with others who are different from themselves, visiting their parents at work, seeing films and television programs, developing hobbies, and participating in imaginative play.
- Set aside time each day for children to study and do homework. Go over their homework with them when it is completed, and discuss what they have learned. Additional information about studying and homework is provided in Chapter 4 of this booklet.
- Stay informed about what your children are learning and doing in school.
- Avoid making children feel pressured to succeed rather than motivated to learn.
- Arrange your family schedule so children have adequate time for homework, studying, and household responsibilities as well as for play and recreational activities.

THE INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

The goal of the instructional program is to help each student achieve academically, according to his or her abilities and educational needs. The program, therefore, is broad in scope to accommodate a wide range of student abilities and needs. It is also sequential so that the knowledge and skills students acquire in earlier grades are the foundation for learning in higher grades.

Standards of Learning Objectives To ensure that students in Virginia public schools acquire certain basic knowledge and skills at each grade from kindergarten through high school, Standards of Learning (SOL) objectives have been developed as part of the Standards of Learning Program. These SOL objectives identify the essential knowledge and skills students are expected to learn in each subject at each grade. Public schools are required by the state to help children accomplish the SOL objectives and are encouraged to go beyond these in their instructional programs.

The following charts contain *only a few of the many SOL Objectives* for elementary school children in kindergarten through grade five. For more complete information about the Standards of Learning Program, you may contact the school principal, the superintendent of your local school division, or Public Information Office, Virginia Department of Education, P.O. Box 6Q, Richmond, Virginia 23216.

- Art
- Health
- Language Arts (listening, speaking, reading, composition, handwriting, spelling, grammar and usage, thinking, study skills, and library skills)
- Mathematics
- Music
- Physical Education
- Science
- Social Studies

Language Arts In this subject elementary school students develop concepts and skills in oral language (listening and speaking); reading; writing (composition, handwriting, spelling); literature; and language processes (grammar and usage, thinking, and study skills).

Kindergarten Students Will Learn to:

- Assume the roles of both the speaker and the listener in informal conversation.
- Develop listening comprehension skills.
- Develop the beginning motor skills necessary for using writing tools.
- Participate in a variety of literary experiences.
- Acquire experience necessary to language development and thinking.

First-Grade Students Will Learn to:

- Communicate effectively in conversation and discussion.
- Ask questions to obtain directions, information, and assistance.
- Develop reading comprehension skills.
- Increase listening, speaking, reading, and writing vocabularies.
- Write letters, words, sentences, and numerals.

Second-Grade Students Will Learn to:

- Produce correctly the basic speech sounds.
- Follow written directions.
- Expand sight reading vocabulary.
- Use beginning reference skills.
- Read and spell words by using word-attack skills.

Third-Grade Students Will Learn to:

- Locate factual information in reading selections.
- Use textbook aids and reference sources to locate information.
- Read various types of material about a variety of subjects.
- Use word attack skills to read and spell words.
- Write legibly and neatly in cursive style.

Fourth-Grade Students Will Learn to:

- Distinguish between fact and opinion in a reading selection.
- Use the dictionary and glossary to obtain information about the spelling, meaning, and pronunciation of words.
- Write a paragraph in which all the sentences are related to one stated topic.
- Recognize that setting, characterization, and plot interrelate in fiction.
- Vary written and oral communications according to purpose and audience.

Fifth-Grade Students Will Learn to:

- Use oral communication skills in a variety of situations.
- State the main idea when it is implied in a reading selection.
- Scan printed material to locate particular facts.
- Spell correctly in written work.
- Compare and contrast literary forms.

Mathematics The goal of mathematics education is to help children acquire the ability to apply mathematics to problems of everyday living and help them develop thinking skills and make valid inferences. The elementary mathematics program also provides a foundation for the advanced study of mathematics.

Advances in technology are causing continuing changes in the emphasis of mathematics instruction. These changes include new emphases upon the development of skills in estimation and mental arithmetic, and the effective use of methods of calculation.

Kindergarten Students Will Learn to:

- Given two sets having ten or fewer numbers, identify one set as having more members, fewer members, or the same number of members as the other.
- Identify the number of items and the corresponding numeral, given a set having 0 to 10 members.
- Combine two sets of objects, five or fewer members, and count the number of elements in the combined set.
- Given a set of ten or fewer objects, remove a subset and count the number of objects in the remaining set.
- Compare physical characteristics of two objects as to length or height.

First-Grade Students Will Learn to:

- Identify the place value of each digit in a two-digit numeral.
- Count by 1's and 10's from 0 to 100.
- Given an ordered set of objects, identify the positions first through fifth.
- Add two whole numbers whose sum is 10 or less.
- Find the difference between two whole numbers, each 10 or less.

Second-Grade Students Will Learn to do the following:

- Identify the place value of each digit in a three-digit numeral.
- Count by 2's and 5's from 0 to 100.
- Find the sum of two whole numbers, 99 or less, without regrouping.
- Find the difference given a subtraction problem related to the basic addition facts through 9 plus 9.
- Solve simple problems containing both words and pictures.

Third-Grade Students Will Learn to:

- Identify the place value of each digit in a four-digit numeral.
- Find the sum of two whole numbers, each 999 or less, with or without regrouping.
- Find the difference between two whole numbers, each 999 or less, without regrouping.
- Find the product of two whole numbers involving basic facts through 5×9.
- Write a fraction for a given part of an object.

Fourth-Grade Students Will Learn to:

- Identify the place value of each digit in a six-digit numeral.
- Round a given whole number, 99 or less, to the nearest 10.
- Find the sum of two whole numbers, each 9,999 or less, with or without regrouping.
- Find the product of two whole numbers involving basic facts through 9×9.
- Find the quotient of two whole numbers and the remainder, given a dividend of two digits or less and a one-digit divisor.

Fifth-Grade Students Will Learn to:

- Identify the place value of each digit in a seven-digit numeral.
- Find the sum of three whole numbers, each 999 or less, with regrouping.
- Find the difference between two whole numbers, each 9,999 or less, with regrouping.
- Find the product of two whole numbers when one factor is 999 or less and the other factor is 99 or less.
- Add with decimals (two addends) through hundredths with regrouping.

Social Studies In this subject students acquire knowledge and skills to prepare them to participate effectively and responsibly in our democratic society. Students learn about democratic beliefs, self and society, history, and the social sciences. They also develop skills for solving problems encountered in everyday life.

Kindergarten Students Will Learn to:

- Recognize self as a unique individual.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the rules to be followed in the school, on the playground, and to and from school.
- Recognize that there are different family structures.
- Use simple charts and graphs.
- Demonstrate an understanding of terms that give direction, location, and distance.

First-Grade Students Will Learn to:

- Identify the physical and social needs of a family.
- Compare and contrast family lifestyles of different cultures.
- Tell how climate and surroundings affect the way people dress and live.
- Recognize that money and other forms of economic exchange may be used to get goods and services that people need and want.
- Interpret simple maps of classroom and school.

Second-Grade Students Will Learn to:

- Tell how and why rules protect rights and property.
- Examine likenesses and differences between communities and make simple generalizations about communities being studied.
- Use and draw simple maps.
- Describe how people depend on each other for goods and services.
- Identify natural resources of their locality and state their importance.

Third-Grade Students Will Learn to:

- Actively participate in the decision-making process by identifying problems and suggesting possible solutions.
- Understand the meaning and significance of the Pledge of Allegiance and other patriotic symbols.
- Recognize interdependence of people and groups.
- Compare customs and habits of different ethnic groups in the United States, and groups in other parts of the world.
- Interpret and make simple charts, graphs, and scales.

Fourth-Grade Students Will Learn to:

- Locate and identify land and water forms on maps and globes.
- Identify reasons why the Virginia colony was settled and give reasons for its hardships and successes.
- Identify and locate Virginia's natural resources, major crops, products, and industries and determine their role in the agricultural and industrial growth of the state.
- Describe the culture and contributions of Native Americans and their contributions to European settlers.
- Describe the process by which a government was established in 17th century Virginia.

Fifth-Grade Students Will Learn to:

- Identify major individuals and groups that immigrated to the United States, their purposes in coming, their contributions, and the areas where they settled.
- Identify major periods and events in the history of the United States and state the roles played by key individuals.
- Describe major features of the United States landscape.
- Identify the important ideals expressed in the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States, the Virginia Declaration of Rights, and the Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom.
- Describe the effects of technology on the development of American society.

Science The science program emphasizes the development of scientific values, such as a longing to know and understand, questioning, searching for data and their meaning, a respect for logic, and consideration of consequences. From kindergarten through grade 5, students explore the characteristics of material objects and living things, the interactions between material objects and living things, and the effects of manipulated variables.

Kindergarten Students Will Learn to:

- Share responsibilities and tasks, and use materials in a safe manner.
- Describe an object on the basis of color, shape, texture, size, and position.
- Sort and classify objects using one variable.
- Observe that the form of objects can be changed.
- Describe the characteristics of living things and identify familiar objects as living or non-living.

First-Grade Students Will Learn to:

- Share responsibilities and tasks, and use materials in a safe manner.
- Put in order a collection of at least three like objects according to size or weight and describe them.
- Describe the basic needs and parts of green plants.
- Tell the basic needs of animals and describe some animal characteristics.
- Identify some commonly used natural resources, describe ways they are used, and tell what we can do to conserve them.

Second-Grade Students Will Learn to:

- Select the appropriate instruments used to make measurements of length, weight, volume, temperature.
- Record and describe information gathered from observations or measurements.
- Make inferences after observations of an object or event.
- Classify substances as solids, liquids, or gases.
- Know the basic life stages of living things.

Third-Grade Students Will Learn to:

- Observe and classify objects into the sets and subsets of similar characteristics.
- Infer the possible cause and effect of an event.
- Place natural events in order and use the sequence to tell what comes next.
- Describe some forms of energy and tell some ways energy is produced.
- Observe and describe how animals behave in different ways to meet their life needs.

Fourth-Grade Students Will Learn to:

- Observe an object or event and make several inferences regarding the identity of the object or plausible reasons for the event.
- Conduct simple experiments in which only one variable is manipulated and all others are held constant.
- Identify, describe, and use electrical conductors, insulators, simple circuits, dry cells (energy sources), and bulbs (energy receivers).
- Describe the relationship between temperature and the three different states of matter.
- Describe the basic components of the solar system as well as major theories that have been proposed throughout history.

Fifth-Grade Students Will Learn to:

- Identify problems or questions and construct valid hypotheses which can be tested.
- Demonstrate the ability of sound to travel through solids, liquids, and gases and describe the wave nature of sound.
- Describe the effects of lenses and mirrors on the path of light.
- Identify the basic characteristics of the ocean and describe ways man has used and misused it.
- Identify samples of the three classes of rocks (igenous, sedimentary, metamorphic) and tell how each is formed.

Music This program is designed to help children develop an appreciation for music and the realization that music is a part of daily life. Participation in the music program provides children with opportunities for creative expression and emotional release as well as feelings of personal accomplishment and satisfaction. Musical talent in children may be discovered and nurtured through this program. Studying music and performing in music activities teaches children self-discipline and group cooperation. It also provides a creative outlet for the use of leisure time and develops musical discrimination abilities.

Kindergarten Students Will Learn to:

- Sing, move to music, and play simple instruments.
- Demonstrate the steady beat.
- Imitate (echo) simple two pitch patterns sung or played by the teacher.
- Match body movement to continuing rhythm patterns.
- Start to sing, play, or move at the appropriate time following the musical introduction of a familiar song.

First-Grade Students Will Learn to:

- Vocally match pitches sung or played.
- Identify high sounds and low sounds.
- Recognize when music changes from one section to a contrasting section.
- Play simple accompaniments on melodic percussion instruments to accompany group singing.
- Demonstrate rhythmic patterns which contain strong (accented) and weak (unaccented) beats.

Second-Grade Students Will Learn to:

- Sing simple melodies in tune.
- Identify notated melodic patterns which move upward, downward, or remain the same.
- Perform, with a steady beat, simple rhythmic patterns from traditional notation.
- Play simple repeated patters (ostinati) in instrumental ensembles.
- Recognize the beginning and ending of phrases within a musical selection.

Third-Grade Students Will Learn to:

- Sing in tune and with good tone quality, melodies within the range of an octave.
- Perform in a two part musical ensemble.
- Improvise on melody and rhythm instruments.
- Perform simple rhythmic patterns from traditional notation.
- Identify the seven letters used for the musical alphabet (A B C D E F G).

Fourth-Grade Students Will Learn to:

- Recognize music as an important part of life.
- Perform and notate rhythm patterns of increased complexity.
- Sing in a group, performing songs in simple harmony.
- Identify orchestral instruments from aural and visual examples.
- Distinguish among short melodic patterns which consist principally of one of the following: a series of repeated tones, scale wise tones (steps), or tones which move by leaps (skips).

Fifth-Grade Students Will Learn to:

- Use music to communicate feelings.
- Perform simple melodic patterns from notation written on the treble staff.
- Recognize and perform beat groupings (meter) involving 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 beats per measure.
- Identify the bottom number or note of the meter signature as determining the kind of a note that gets one beat.
- Demonstrate beginning choral behaviors and skills in group singing.

Art Participation in art experiences helps children develop an appreciation for art and exposes them to a variety of art areas, such as drawing, painting, printmaking, collage, sculpture, construction, crafts, and mass communication media. This subject also provides children with opportunities for creative expression. Art instruction is frequently designed to correlate with the content of other subject areas. For example, art activities may be focused upon a theme related to instruction in social studies or language arts.

Kindergarten Students Will Learn to:

- Discover that the senses are avenues to self expression through art.
- Express personal experiences, thoughts, and feelings through art.
- Demonstrate proper care and use of art materials.
- Identify colors by name.
- Identify line and line characteristics.

First-Grade Students Will Learn to:

- Express self creatively in drawing and painting the human figure.
- Recognize that personal creative work and the work of others has value.
- Use correct art vocabulary for concepts, media, and processes.
- Use and care for materials properly.
- Identify primary colors and variations of these colors.

Second-Grade Students Will Learn to:

- Produce artwork that is inventive.
- Use appropriate vocabulary related to art experiences.
- Work cooperatively in art group activities.
- Use the total space on a two-dimensional surface or picture plane.
- Develop three-dimensional spatial concept skills.

Third-Grade Students Will Learn to:

- Produce artwork which communicates personal experiences and feelings in a variety of ways.
- Describe differences among works of art.
- Recognize that nature, people, imagination, experimentation, and events are all appropriate source material for art.
- Produce artwork which demonstrates knowledge of foreground and background.
- Effectively depict positive and negative space in compositions.

Fourth-Grade Students Will Learn to:

- Generate creative ideas through experimentation.
- Use past experiences and simulated situations as subject matter for art work.
- Distinguish between works of art which have the same subject matter.
- Classify works of art.
- Practice safety precautions when using tools.

Fifth-Grade Students Will Learn to:

- Identify symbols and themes which artists have used in their work.
- Differentiate between two-dimensional (2-D) and three-dimensional (3-D) art objects.
- Create the illusion of movement or direction in a design.
- Apply informal (asymmetrical) balance to compositions or constructions.
- Compare art forms that reflect the uniquenss of the culture from which they arise.

Health Instruction in this subject is designed to help students acquire knowledge and skills essential for healthful living as well as for personal fitness and effectiveness. At each grade in elementary school the focus is upon five major topics: 1) disease prevention and control, 2) mental health, 3) nutrition, 4) personal growth and personal health, and 5) safety and first aid.

Physical Education The purpose of this program in elementary school is to improve children's physical fitness and help them develop respect for their own minds and bodies. The program is also designed to aid in ac-

Kindergarten Students Will Learn to:

- Demonstrate desirable health practices.
- Recognize the importance of individuals who care for others and aid in preventing illness.
- Practice appropriate eating habits.
- Develop and practice health habits related to personal hygiene and grooming.
- Recognize and demonstrate bus safety practices.

First-Grade Students Will Learn to:

- Recognize that proper health practices help prevent illness and disease.
- Recognize and explain reasons why people need foods.
- Recognize and practice proper dental hygiene.
- Demonstrate an awareness of and respect for the rights and feelings of others.
- Develop a respect for the proper handling of medicines.

Second-Grade Students Will Learn to:

- Identify and practice good personal health habits.
- Recognize ways to prevent disease by keeping the home, school, and community clean.
- Identify the food groups and a variety of foods from each group.
- Recognize the importance of the family.
- Identify procedures to follow in case of an accident or sudden illness.

Third-Grade Students Will Learn to:

- Identify sources of water pollution and their effects on health.
- Plan a balanced meal.
- Recognize individual growth patterns.
- Recognize how drug products and household substances affect health.
- Follow rules and safety precautions in play activities.

Fourth-Grade Students Will Learn to:

- Define communicable diseases and identify ways in which they are transmitted.
- Identify behaviors which contribute to positive mental growth and development.
- Evaluate a personal diet in relationship to a balanced diet.
- Explain the structure, function, and care of certain body parts.
- Identify and apply first aid procedures for emergencies.

Fifth-Grade Students Will Learn to:

- Identify the causes of communicable diseases which are common to children.
- Define good mental health.
- Explain the structure and function of the body systems.
- Identify changes that occur during puberty and their effects on growth and development.
- Explain the effects of alcohol, drugs, and tobacco on the systems of the body.

quiring skills which children may use throughout their lives, such as skills in sports activities and in movement, coordination, balance, and flexibility.

Because each child develops at his or her own pace, physical education instruction is individualized, with emphasis upon improving one's own knowledge and skills rather than competing with others.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This chapter provided suggestions to help parents keep alive children's interest in learning. Also included was a summary of the elementary school instructional program and examples of knowledge and skills children are expected to learn in subjects taught in public elementary schools throughout Virginia.

No mention has yet been made about the study of foreign languages. The opportunity to study foreign languages in elementary school is presently offered in only a few localities in the state. Parents who are interested in finding out about the availability of this program in their schools, or in learning more about other instructional programs described in this chapter may contact the school principal or superintendent's office in their school division.

Samples of SOL Objectives in Physical Education

Kindergarten Students Will Learn to:
- Recognize that exercise causes an increase in heart rate.
- Identify body parts used in movement.
- Perform creative movement.
- Perform lateral movements.
- Follow two instructions in a given sequence.

First-Grade Students Will Learn to:
- Recognize that exercise causes an increase in heart rate.
- Explore movements expressing shapes and/or sizes.
- Move the body with creative expression.
- Perform various animal movements.
- Observe safety precautions while playing a game.

Second-Grade Students Will Learn to:
- Recognize that exercise causes an increase in heart rate.
- Work with a partner and within groups of three or four.
- Engage in non-locomotor movements to a rhythmical beat.
- Imitate movements of animals and objects.
- Choose to exhibit the characteristics of gracious winning and losing in game situations.

Third-Grade Students Will Learn to:
- Demonstrate cardiorespiratory endurance.
- Balance on various body parts while passing an object to a partner.
- Utilize various movements to a rhythmical beat while manipulating a prop.
- Move over objects placed on the balance beam.
- Demonstrate good sportsmanship in a game situation.

Fourth-Grade Students Will Learn to:
- Demonstrate cardiorespiratory endurance.
- Utilize time and force while moving to a variety of rhythmic patterns.
- Perform various partner stunts.
- Perform a back bend from a supine (lying on the back) position.
- Participate as an active member of a team.

Fifth-Grade Students Will Learn to:
- Demonstrate cardiorespiratory endurance.
- Perform movement to accented and unaccented beats.
- Perform an inverted balance.
- Kick a soccerball into a goal.
- Shoot a variety of basketball shots.

CHAPTER 3
SPECIAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHILDREN

This chapter is about the many special programs and services offered in public elementary schools throughout Virginia to help children benefit from the instructional program.

LIBRARY MEDIA PROGRAM

The library media center is a focal point of the elementary school for students and staff. Children come to the center individually and with their classes to read and borrow books, listen to stories, and use reference materials, learning kits, computers, and audio-visual materials.

Librarians and teachers work together to help children learn how to use the resources and materials in the library media center. For example, students learn how to locate and use reference books, use the computer, and select books for class assignments and for leisure reading. Parents should encourage children to use the many resources in the library media center.

TESTING PROGRAM

All elementary schools administer certain tests to children as part of the state testing program approved by the Board of Education. These required tests are given as follows:

Grades 1-5 Criterion-referenced (objective-referenced) tests in language arts and mathematics

Grade 4 Achievement series and educational ability series

The results of these tests, along with other information about children's academic performance, are used in planning instruction for individual children as well as for groups of children.

School divisions may decide to use other tests as well. For example, most elementary

schools administer a readiness test to children in kindergarten or first grade. The results of readiness tests are used to plan learning experiences for young children, particularly in language arts and mathematics.

Throughout their elementary school years, children take teacher-made achievement tests to determine what they have learned. These may be written tests, either objective or essay. Or they may be performance tests in which children are asked to do certain things to show what they have learned. For example, in mathematics they might be asked to measure objects to demonstrate understanding of measurement terms and concepts.

It is important for parents to understand what their children's test scores mean. Parents, therefore, are encouraged to meet with teachers to discuss children's test results and plan what they may do at home to help their children progress in school.

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING PROGRAM

Some elementary schools have an elementary counselor who is responsible for providing a guidance and counseling program for all children, not just those experiencing serious difficulties. In addition to counseling with children individually and in small groups to help them with concerns which hamper their achievement in school, counseling is also provided to help children learn to get along better with others, take greater responsibility, make realistic decisions, and develop more effective behaviors.

The involvement of parents and teachers is very important to the success of this program. Parents, counselors, and teachers plan together to help children who are having trouble learning or getting along in school. Counselors also provide short-term counseling for parents who are having difficulties with their children, and conduct group sessions for parents about child development and parenting techniques.

Classroom guidance sessions are conducted by counselors and teachers for children in all grades. In these sessions, through the use of puppets, stories, films, discussions, music, art, and other materials, children develop interpersonal skills, self-understanding, communication techniques, and study skills.

The elementary school counselor also works through a team approach with the principal, school psychologist, school social worker or visiting teacher, school nurse, and teachers to provide services for children who have more difficult problems. The functions of this team, known as the pupil personnel services or child study team, are explained later in this chapter.

School Psychology Program

When a child has problems which seriously interfere with learning or adapting to school, the child's parents and teachers try to provide the help and support needed to resolve the problems. If there is an elementary counselor in the school, the counselor also provides counseling to help the child. When no improvement results from these efforts, the services of a school psychologist are generally sought.

As a first step, the school psychologist usually consults with the the child's parents, teacher, and counselor to get a clear picture of the child's history and present difficulties as well as what has been done in trying to help the child. The psychologist also may observe the child in the classroom and talk with him or her one or more times. With parental permission, assessment and diagnostic techniques may be administered to collect additional information about the child's abilities and difficulties.

The findings gathered by the school psychologist through the use of these techniques are then discussed with the child's parents, counselor, and teachers, and decisions are made about ways to help the child. Sometimes, other professional personnel, such as the school social worker or visiting teacher and school medical personnel, also may be involved in the discussion and decision making. This pupil personnel services or child study team approach is described in another section of this chapter.

In most school divisions, each school psychologist works in several schools to help students who are experiencing difficult problems in learning or adapting to school. Sometimes, in addition to the services already described, the psychologist may provide short-term counseling for these students and their parents.

School Social Worker/Visiting Teacher Program

Some elementary school children have difficulty in school because of factors at home or in the community over which they have little or no control. School social workers and visiting teachers work with families, schools, and community agencies. Their program is designed to help school personnel identify the out-of-school causes of children's problems and to alleviate or eliminate the problems so children may benefit fully from the educational program.

School social workers and visiting teachers generally visit children's homes to work directly with their families. During these visits they counsel with the families about conditions affecting children, determine the kinds of services needed, and assist the families to obtain these services. As services are being provided, they also consult periodically with the families, the community agencies providing the services, and the school to coordinate efforts to help the children and keep abreast of progress being made.

As part of their contacts with families, school social workers and visiting teachers are able to explain the school's program and enlist parents' involvement in their children's education. These professionals also serve on the school's pupil personnel services or child study team, described in the following section.

Pupil Personnel or Child Study Team

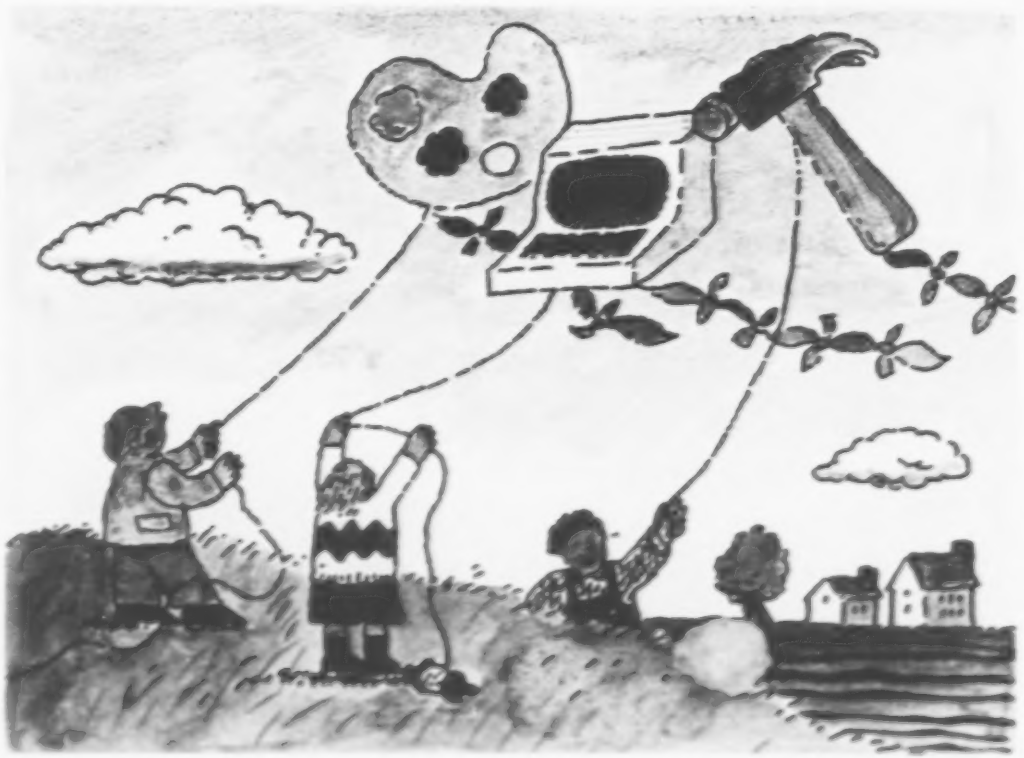
Some children develop difficult problems or have special needs related to learning, behavior, or adapting to school for which help is needed beyond that already provided by teachers, parents, and counselors. Some schools have a pupil personnel services or child study team to find the best ways to help these children. Children may be referred for the team's services by the principal, teachers, parents, counselor, or other professional school personnel.

The pupil personnel services or child study team consists of the elementary school counselor, if there is one in the school, the school psychologist, and the school social worker or visiting teacher, all of whom are pupil personnel services workers. In many schools the principal and school nurse are

also members of the team. The counselor usually serves as the coordinator for the team. When the team meets to consult about a particular child, the child's teacher is asked to participate in the team's discussion. The child's parent(s) usually are also included.

Using a variety of methods and techniques, the team meets periodically to determine children's needs; gather and evaluate information about them; and decide upon and recommend solutions to help these children. Recommendations may include placement in selected, special, or advanced instructional programs; participation in programs or services for personal development; and/or referrals to community medical, mental health, social services, and recreational programs.

While their recommendations are being carried out, the team observes and evaluates the progress being made by the children. If satisfactory progress is not shown, the team may recommend additional or alternative services.



CAREER EDUCATION

Career education in the elementary school is designed to provide children with awareness of the world of work. This program is carried out primarily by classroom teachers who integrate career education experiences throughout the instructional program. As part of other subjects taught in the classroom, children are introduced to jobs people have in school, at home, and in the community. They are also encouraged to learn about themselves—what they like, their interests, and how important their likes and interests are in thinking about work they may do in the future. Many elementary classroom teachers take children on field trips in the community to see workers doing their jobs. Teachers also invite workers from various career fields to come to school to talk about their careers. Another major emphasis of the career education program is to help children learn to take pride in completing tasks well and seeing themselves as competent in their work at school and home.

HEALTH SERVICES

School health services are a joint responsibility of the school and the local health department. Screening programs are conducted by schools to identify students who may need attention by a physician and/or dentist. These programs usually include assessment of height and weight measurements, vision and hearing tests, inspection of teeth and throat, observation of postural defects, and assessment of speech. The school nurse, in cooperation with teachers, is the person primarily responsible for appraising and identifying the health needs of the children. Where there are no school nurses, teachers are responsible for screening.

Some children who are under a physician's care must take medication during the school day. Parents whose children are among those who do should contact the school to learn the procedures for having the medication dispensed to their children.

PROGRAMS FOR GIFTED STUDENTS

Gifted children are those who have superior abilities, talents, and potentials. Programs for gifted students are offered in public elementary schools throughout Virginia to help children develop their special talents and abilities.

Steps to identify potentially gifted children are begun in kindergarten so that programs tailored to meet their special educational needs may be provided as early as possible. Because no single criteria may be employed to identify giftedness, a variety of screening devices are used, such as teacher observation and special tests. Parents' permission is required for any tests given for this purpose beyond the usual tests administered in school.

In screening young children for education programs for the gifted, particular attention is given to verbal ability, high interest in books, ability to read and do simple mathematics at an early age, social development, and physical maturity.

In the upper elementary grades many criteria are used to identify students who have the potential and/or exceptional abilities in one or more of the following areas:

- General intellectual ability—advanced information and an advanced aptitude for abstract reasoning and conceptualization.
- Academic ability—exceptional aptitude in a specific area such as language arts or mathematics.
- Visual and/or performing arts ability—consistently exceptional ability in the development of a product or performance in any of the visual or performing arts, such as art, music, drama, and dance.
- Practical arts ability—consistently exceptional ability in the development of a product or performance in any area of vocational education.
- Psychosocial ability—exceptional leadership ability.
- Creative and productive thinking ability—exceptional ability in formulating new and positive approaches to conventional tasks, or creativity in thinking and problem solving.

Students may be nominated for the education program for gifted students by school personnel, parents, peers, or themselves. The decision to admit children to the program is made by a committee of qualified professionals in each school division. The committee reviews information about students who have been nominated as gifted and needing specially planned educational services different from those provided through the regular instructional program. Many types of information are considered about each student nominated, such as individual or group IQ test scores; individual or group achievement test scores; the results of creativity tests; rating scales, checklists, and questionnaires; previous accomplishments; pupil products judged by experts; scores on tests of special ability in the visual, performing, and practical arts; interest inventories; and other valid and reliable measures of student performance.

In the primary grades classroom teachers are generally responsible for providing special learning experiences to enhance the development of children who are identified as potentially gifted. In some schools these children also participate part of the time in education programs for the gifted which are held in resource rooms in their own schools or in other school buildings. These programs usually include an academic program, a program in the arts, and a program to stimulate creativity in thinking and problem solving.

Children in upper elementary grades

who have been identified as gifted usually receive specialized instruction from their classroom teachers integrated into the regular instructional program. In some schools, however, they work most of their time with a specially trained teacher in the resource room.

In addition to education programs for the gifted during the regular school year, some school divisions offer summer programs for gifted elementary school children. Some colleges and universities also have programs for them. Although a fee is charged for these latter programs, financial assistance in the form of scholarships is often available. Parents may get more information about these programs and financial assistance from their local schools or local administrator of gifted education programs.

In making decisions about the education and life style of gifted children, it is very important for parents to take into account their children's social, emotional, and physical maturity. Although children may be gifted, they have the same social, emotional, and physical developmental needs as other children. They, too, need a well-balanced life style with adequate time and opportunities for social interaction, recreation, and fun with others their own ages. Parents should avoid pushing or pressuring gifted children in developing their special abilities or talents. Furthermore, parents should be wary of having these children placed in educational or social situations which they are not mature enough to handle, such as being promoted two or more grade levels beyond their regular grade and, therefore, spending most of their time with older students.

PROGRAMS FOR HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

Public elementary schools throughout Virginia offer education programs for handicapped children. State law guarantees that all handicapped children and youth, ages two to 21, are provided a free and appropriate education. These laws require that public schools identify and evaluate children suspected of having handicapping conditions. This evaluation may be done only with the written consent of parents or guardians.

When they suspect their children are handicapped, parents or guardians have the right to ask that a comprehensive assessment be conducted at no cost to them. Furthermore, they have the right to see the results of these evaluations and request to have them explained.

Public schools also must provide handicapped children with related services which are necessary for them to benefit from the instructional program. Examples of such services are counseling, psychological or social work services, and speech and hearing therapy.

Special education programs are designed to meet the specific educational needs of handicapped children and must be provided in the most normal setting possible. Such settings include the regular classroom, a special classroom, a resource room, a combination of regular and special classrooms, a center-based program, a regional program, hospital or home instruction, a private day school, a state residential school, a private residential school, and educational programs offered through other state agencies. The written consent of the child's parents or guardians is required for placement in a special education program.

Handicapped children attend special education classes only for those subjects in which they need special instruction in order to learn. The classes are taught by teachers who are specially trained to to teach them. Some children are in one or two special education classes daily for certain subjects and are in regular classes the rest of the school day. Others are in regular classes for all subjects and get extra help from resource teachers for some subjects. In some cases, children are in special education classes for all their subjects. Like other children, children in special education programs take part in other programs and activities offered in their school.

Individualized Education Plan (IEP) A plan for learning is developed for each child admitted to a special education program. Designed by the child's parents, teachers, and other school staff members, the IEP includes what the child should learn and the related services which will be provided. Every IEP is reviewed each year and changed, if necessary, so handicapped children may receive the instructional program and services which will most help them.

Alternative Day Schools and Regional Programs Some handicapped children may need certain kinds of education programs which are not offered in their schools. When this occurs, the children attend schools in other places which have the programs they need. Every effort is made to find programs in schools as close as possible to the children's homes. There are no costs to parents for this education or for transportation.

HOSPITAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Education programs are available to children receiving acute health care services in certain medical centers. These programs are offered at no cost to parents at Children's Hospital, the Medical College of Virginia in Richmond; Children's Rehabilitation Center and the University of Virginia Hospitals in Charlottesville; and Children's Hospital of the King's Daughters and Norfolk General Hospital in Norfolk.

School is an integral part of the health care treatment program for children admitted to these hospitals. Because disruptions in students' educational progress can result in the development of academic handicaps, the hospital programs strive to help children continue their school work. Being involved in learning experiences also helps alleviate for children the stresses of being hospitalized.

As part of the overall medical treatment program for children, these hospital education programs try to create a learning environment for children as similar as possible to their regular schools. Physicians, other hospital personnel, and teachers in the programs work together to help children get well and to prepare them for successful re-entry into their home schools.

HOMEBOUND INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES

Homebound instruction is provided at no cost to parents for children whose medical needs temporarily prevent them from attending school. Certified teachers go to the children's homes to provide instruction that will enable them to keep up with their studies. Children must meet specific eligibility requirements to qualify for homebound instruction. Additional information about these requirements may be obtained from your local school division.

INTERAGENCY DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

Diagnostic health services are available to children through a statewide network of diagnostic specialty clinics operated by the

Virginia Department of Health. These clinics provide diagnostic/evaluative and medical-surgical care programs for children from birth through age 21. Educational personnel, selected by the Department of Education, are assigned to the clinics to perform the following services:

Assessment of the developmental/achievement levels, learning styles, and learning strengths and needs of children.

Coordination of services of the clinic staff and appropriate educational staff of the local school divisions.

Additional information about these interagency diagnostic services may be obtained from the Public Information Office, Virginia Department of Education or the Bureau of Maternal and Child Health, Virginia Department of Health.

REMEDIAL PROGRAMS

Elementary schools provide remedial programs for children who are having learning difficulties in reading or mathematics. Teachers identify children who need assistance in developing their basic skills in reading and mathematics and refer them for participation in the program. Parents who think their children need additional help in these subjects should discuss with their children's teachers the possibility of enrolling their children in these programs.

CHAPTER I PROGRAMS

Chapter I programs are designed to meet the needs of educationally deprived children so they may be successful in school. Through these federally funded programs, teachers, aides, and other staff personnel are employed by school divisions to provide additional help in mathematics, reading, and language development for students who need it. Materials and equipment for the programs are also purchased with federal funds.

In each school division objective standards are set for identifying children to participate in this program. These standards are subject to approval by the Virginia Department of Education. Generally, standards include the use of standardized achievement test scores, other test scores, and teacher ratings.

Children identified as having the greatest needs receive first priority for participating in the program. The instruction provided is tailored to each child's abilities and needs. In most schools, groups of 10 to 15 students leave their regular classrooms for 30 to 40 minutes each day to work with Chapter I teachers. The teachers are often assisted by one or more trained teacher aides. Sometimes, these teachers, along with teacher aides, also work with these children in their regular classrooms.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Parents interested in finding out more about any of these programs or services may contact their elementary school principal, the office of the local division superintendent, or Public Information Office, Virginia Department of Education, 101 North 14th Street, Richmond, Virginia 23216.

CHAPTER 4

HOW PARENTS MAY HELP THEIR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHILDREN

A MESSAGE TO PARENTS

Parents are the most important persons in the lives of children ages five to ten. Although children of these ages may develop caring relationships with teachers or other adults, parents are the center of their world and have the greatest influence upon them. Parents' attitudes and expectations, the child rearing methods they use, and the home environment they provide have enormous impact upon children, either positively or negatively. What parents say and do and neglect to say and do influences childrens self-concepts, beliefs, attitudes, values, confidence, behaviors, and motivation to learn.

This chapter was written to help parents better understand what elementary children are like and how they may help their children during these years. Included is information about the developmental characteristics and needs of five- to ten-year-olds, child rearing techniques, and where to get additional help if problems arise.

WHAT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHILDREN ARE LIKE

Although each child is unique, all children follow the same pattern of development as they grow from birth to adulthood. This development occurs in stages related to children's ages. At each stage children of about the same ages experience similar changes, have similar needs, and engage in similar behavior. Because children mature at different rates, however, some may enter a particular stage a little earlier or later than their peers. Nevertheless, children go through these stages in the same sequence, and no stage is ever skipped.

Knowing what children will be like at each developmental stage enables parents to understand them better, be better prepared to use appropriate child rearing practices and have better relationships with them. Knowing in advance what is ahead also can help parents cope more effectively with the trying behaviors which are normal at certain stages.

Studies of children reveal that these stages of development occur in cycles. In the beginning of each cycle children are in a period

of equilibrium or harmony. They feel good about themselves and their world, are cooperative most of the time, and get along well with others, including parents. Family life can be very pleasant during this part of the cycle.

This period is followed by a time during which children's behavior begins to change. They begin to feel less pleased with themselves and their world. These changes become obvious in their attitudes and behavior, and life becomes somewhat less enjoyable for them and their parents.

The last stage in the cycle is a period of disequilibrium or disharmony. During this phase children are unhappy with themselves and their world, and they show it. They are easily upset and can be difficult to get along with. Living with them can present difficulties. Parents, however, can use certain child rearing methods to make periods of disequilibrium less difficult for their children and themselves. Examples of some of these methods are included in this chapter.

The following sections describe the **behavioral stages of development of children from ages five to ten.** This information has been adapted from the work of Dr. Arnold Gesell, as described in *Child Behavior From Birth to Ten* by Drs. Frances L. Ilg and Louise B. Ames.

Age Five This is a period when children are pleased with themselves and their world. Five year olds are generally happy, secure, cooperative, and friendly. They prefer staying at home in familiar surroundings and rarely attempt tasks they cannot accomplish successfully. Thus, they avoid frustration and unpleasantness.

Mother is generally their favorite person, and they like to be with her and do things for her. They especially enjoy praise from their parents, which is usually well-deserved because of their happy dispositions and cooperative behavior. This is a particularly delightful stage for children and parents.

As children approach the age of five and a half they begin a transition period during which their behavior starts to change. They become less happy with themselves and others, and are no longer the calm, secure, delightful children of just a few months ago.

Age Six Six year olds are very unpredictable and changeable, with moods and behaviors which shift from one extreme to the other with amazing speed. At this age children may be loving and cooperative one moment, and angry and defiant the next. They also have boundless energy and are willing to undertake just about anything, even activities which they are not yet capable of handling. As a result they often find themselves in situations with which they cannot cope and become frustrated and upset.

Six year olds want their own way and generally expect others to meet their demands. They tend to be self-centered, impudent, and aggressive. They always want to win and will settle only for being the first and best, having the most, and being the most loved. Along with this, they blame others when things go wrong and find it painful to be criticized, blamed, or punished. They also spend considerable time daydreaming.

Mother is no longer the most important person. In fact, when things go wrong, they usually hold her responsible and direct their anger at her. During those rare times when they are pleased with life, they can still be loving and cooperative.

Living with a child of six can be exasperating at times. Parents should try to remember that six year olds are finding life difficult and are acting in ways which are normal for them at this stage. Parents will find it helpful to avoid becoming involved in frequent "no-win" arguments with them. This can be accomplished by overlooking unimportant matters and taking stands only on important issues which affect childrens well-being or that of the family. Parents also should continue to set reasonable limits for children's behavior. These limits should be calmly explained to children at a time when no conflict is taking place, and parents should then see that these limits are consistently observed. At about age six and a half, the stormy behavior of this period begins to wane as the next stage of behavioral development approaches.

Age Seven Children of seven are calmer, more cooperative, and less active and outgoing than they were in their previous stage. They frequently prefer to be observers rather than active participants, and like to be alone at times. Often tired and moody, children of this age are very concerned about themselves and how others treat them. They can sit quietly and listen for longer periods and are inclined to spend much time thinking things over and analyzing them.

Seven year olds sometimes see life as being unfair to them. They tend to complain that everyone, including parents and teachers, "pick on them, don't like them, and leave them out." They are highly sensitive to real

or imagined slights by others and have a tendency to worry. Another typical characteristic of this age is their need to be part of a group and not to be singled out for either praise or criticism.

These children generally have high expectations for themselves and yearn for success. They often devote long periods of time to tasks which they may or may not yet be able to accomplish. Parents should help seven year olds learn to stop activities before becoming overly discouraged or frustrated. Parents also can help them by taking time to listen with understanding and acceptance to their frequent complaints, realizing that these problems seem very real to children. In as much as complaining is typical behavior for seven year olds, parents are advised not to take their complaints too seriously.

Age Eight The age of eight brings a new behavioral stage in which children become very outgoing and ready for new experiences, new activities, and new friends. They are full of energy, excitement, enthusiasm, and curiosity, and no challenge seems too great. Their interests are short-term, and they quickly become impatient to move ahead to new challenges. Eight year olds often overestimate their own abilities and are highly critical of themselves when they do not succeed. They need guidance from parents in learning not to do too much or undertake tasks far beyond their current capabilities. In addition, they need help in learning not to be too hard on themselves when they are not successful. Parents should help children of this age understand that all people have occasional setbacks or failures. They also should help them

learn to take failures and mistakes in stride and try new ways of handling situations.

Children of eight are very concerned about having good relationships with others. They care about what others think and do, and focus attention less upon themselves than they did previously. And although friends are more important to them than before, they still very much want a close relationship with mother.

Age Nine At about the age of nine children become more serious and sure of themselves, and develop a greater sense of truth. Their attention is directed toward gaining more independence and becoming more self-sufficient. Activities outside the home are of increasing importance to them, and they tend to be concerned about the opinions of friends rather than those of family members. Many children this age like team sports and games and will work hard to perfect their skills in these activities.

Wanting to be mature and independent, nine year olds often resist parental authority, especially direct commands and bossing. This resistance is generally shown by withdrawal, or by complaining while they do what is asked of them.

This is a period when children tend to worry and take life seriously. They become upset by matters which previously did not bother them and frequently complain about physical ailments, such as headaches and stomach aches. These ailments, which seem very real to them, are their way of coping with unpleasant tasks or situations. Parents should respond to such complaints with understanding, but at the same time should be aware of the frequency with which the complaints occur. As children approach the age of ten, the worries, resistance, and complaints begin to disappear.

Age Ten This is one of the most pleasant stages in children's development. Children are very happy with themselves and their

world and are affectionate, reliable, and adaptable. Parents once again are held in high esteem. Ten year olds want to cooperate and please them. Children of this age get along well with others, too, treating them with consideration and expecting the same in return. Their sense of truthfulness continues to increase, and they are more practical and realistic than ever before.

Age ten is a wonderful time for children and their parents. It has often been described as nature's way of providing a rest for parents prior to the demanding and erratic adolescent period which will soon follow.

CHILDREN'S NEEDS

In addition to the developmental needs of each behavioral stage, children have continuing needs which also must be met in order for them to experience healthy development. The following sections contain information about these ongoing needs.

Security Children need to develop a sense of security—the belief that their world is predictable and their parents can be depended upon and trusted. A sense of security is developed when parents provide a consistent pattern of living and are consistent in their childrearing methods and expectations of children. Children are able to feel secure when their parents are secure enough to set rules and limits for them and to say "no" firmly and consistently when it is in their children's best interests. Inconsistency by parents leads children to believe that life is unpredictable and that parents are not dependable.

Love Boys and girls of all ages need love and affection from their parents. Telling children regularly through words and actions that they are loved is important to their healthy development. A kiss, a hug, a caring touch, or the words, "I love you," go a long way in helping meet this important need.

Understanding and Acceptance Children need to feel that parents understand and accept them as unique individuals. Parents can convey understanding by encouraging children to talk about their feelings, listening and responding to them with respect, and allowing them the right to have feelings, likes, and dislikes which may differ from those of their parents.

Parents can show acceptance by encouraging each child to develop his or her unique abilities, qualities, and characteristics. Comparing children with each other should be avoided because it denies their individuality. Equally damaging is steering them in direc-

tions which are not compatible with their abilities and interests. Such practices can lead children to feel inadequate and become overcompetitive, withdrawn, aggressive, or submissive. Some children who feel inadequate also develop psychosomatic symptoms.

Competency Children need to see themselves as competent. Parents can help children develop feelings of competency by encouraging them to try new tasks and make choices, decisions, and plans which are in keeping with their level of maturity. Parents also should encourage children to learn to cope with difficulties of everyday life and become increasingly responsible for their self-care and for their own behavior.

When children express interest in undertaking a new activity, parents sometimes have difficulty deciding whether or not the activity is suitable. In making such decisions, consideration should be given to children's abilities and levels of social and emotional maturity in relation to the activity. Any safety risks involved should also be considered. If parents believe that children are not developmentally ready for the activity or that the safety risks are too great, they should explain to children why the activity will not be allowed. A mutually agreeable substitute should then be found. If, however, the activity is in keeping with children's abilities and maturity and it appears that the activity can be accomplished safely, children should be encouraged to pursue the new interest.

Parents can increase children's competency in other ways, too. They should take time to answer children's questions clearly and concisely in language children can understand. When asked, they should explain to their children how things work and why events occur as they do. In addition, children should be given responsibilities and duties they can successfully perform which contribute to family life. For example, young children can be given responsibility for tasks such as emptying waste baskets, feeding pets, or helping to set the table. Older children can do tasks such as helping to prepare simple meals or cleaning the yard. Children benefit not only from learning how to do such tasks but also from fulfilling responsibilities they have been given and seeing themselves as contributing members of the family.

Success Closely related to children's need for competency is their need for success. Being successful in most tasks, both at home and school, helps children develop self-esteem and confidence, which influence their motivation to learn and become more responsible and independent.

Parents can increase the probabilities of children's success by guiding them in choosing activities compatible with their maturity, interests, and abilities. These activities should not be so difficult that they result in constant failure or frustration nor so easy that they present few challenges or opportunities for growth and learning. When children have done well or tried hard to perform a task, parents should acknowledge their accomplishments and efforts.

It is important for parents to respond constructively when children fail or make mistakes. At such times, parents should show that they understand their children's feelings and encourage them to try again, rather than responding in ways which cause children to conclude that they must be perfect. Parents also should help them explore new ways of accomplishing the task.

Discipline The goal of parental discipline is to rear children to become responsible, effective adults. Parental discipline which allows parents and children to maintain their dignity and integrity is the best way to reach this goal.

Parents are encouraged to use methods of discipline which are based upon respect and are appropriate to children's ages and understanding. Disciplining children on an emotional level by humiliating, ridiculing, threatening, hitting, and yelling at them undermines their dignity as well as that of the parents. While these methods may seem at times to be the easiest for parents and may even result in temporary obedience, they are the most damaging to children. And the conformity they bring on the part of children is usually short-lived.

An effective approach for parents to use to discipline children for misbehavior follows:

- In a calm manner explain to children why their behavior is unacceptable.
- In disciplining young children, explain the acceptable behavior and the reasons for it. With older children, parents and children together should identify and consider alternative behaviors and agree upon one which is acceptable.
- If agreement cannot be reached, the choice

of behavior should be made by the parents and carefully explained to the children.

If the undesirable behavior continues, parents should use reasonable methods of discipline, such as removing children from the situation or using logical or natural consequences. Information about these methods is provided later in this chapter.

Respect While it is undeniably important for children to show respect for parents, it is equally important for parents to show respect for children. The following are suggestions of ways in which parents may show they not only love but also respect their children.

- Provide a well-balanced and orderly life style in which children have adequate time for school work, play, recreation, family responsibilities, and rest.
- Accept children's right to be their unique selves.
- Give children opportunities to solve problems and participate in making decisions and plans related to certain family matters, such as family trips and household chores.
- Avoid rearing children to feel they are worthwhile only if they meet their parents' demands or expectations. Encourage them to develop personal goals and interests.
- Have high, but realistic, expectations for children. These should be compatible with their abilities, characteristics, and interests rather than based upon parents' desires to look good through their children's accomplishments.
- Avoid using harsh methods in disciplining children.

COMMUNICATING WITH CHILDREN

The quality of parent-child relationships is largely determined by the methods parents use in communicating with their children. Too often, without being aware of it, some parents discourage open communication and good parent-child relationships by using methods such as threatening, insulting, lecturing, yelling, shaming, accusing, ordering, ridiculing, humiliating, and blaming. These methods are ineffective and harmful in communicating with children. When used regularly over time, they damage children's sense of self-respect and well-being and result in problems in parent-child relationships.

Empathic Listening This simple technique involves using empathy in listening to children. Listening with empathy means putting yourself in your children's place so you may hear not only the words being said but also the underlying messages children are sending about their thoughts, feelings, and motives. As part of this technique, parents must be aware of children's facial expressions, gestures, pitch and tone of voice, rate of speech, and body posture. All of these provide important clues for understanding what children are really saying.

Empathic listening helps parents comprehend the full meaning of what children are trying to tell them. This type of listening is essential for responding to children in ways which foster trust, honest communication, and healthy parent-child relationships.

Empathic Responding The use of this technique allows parents to respond to children in a manner which conveys understanding and respect, and encourages continued parent-child communication. An empathic response by a parent lets the child know that the child's feelings, as well as the reason for those feelings, have been understood. The following parent-child interactions are examples of *empathic responses* by parents to children, as well as ineffective responses:

Child: *You always let Susan do whatever she wants just because she's older than I am. It's not fair that she gets to stay up later than I do.*

Empathic Response by Parent: *You're upset because it seems as if I am treating you unfairly.*

Analysis: *In this empathic response the parent conveyed respect for and understanding of the child's feelings and the reason for those feelings. This kind of response encourages continued parent-child communication.*

Child: *You always let Susan do whatever she wants just because she's older than I am. It's not fair that she gets to stay up later than I do.*

Ineffective Response by Parent: *You always want your own way. Get into bed right now!*

Analysis: *In this response the parent used an accusation and an order. The parent did not deal with the child's concern or feelings about the situation, and the methods used probably resulted in anger and hurt feelings. Although the child may obey the parent by going to bed, the issue has not been resolved satisfactorily and is likely to arise again.*

Child: *My teacher told me that I did a wonderful job in reading today!*

Empathic Response by Parent: *You're proud that you did so well in reading today and that the teacher noticed it.*

Analysis: *In this empathic response the parent conveyed respect for and understanding of the child's feelings and the reason for those feelings. This kind of response encourages continued parent-child communication.*

Child: *My teacher told me that I did a wonderful job in reading today!*

Ineffective Response by Parent: *I'm glad that you have finally begun to pay attention and try harder in school. I knew you could do better in your reading.*

Analysis: *Instead of acknowledging the child's sense of accomplishment and happiness, this parent used the situation for lecturing the child and criticizing past behavior. This kind of response used over time can discourage children's motivation to learn and also cause them to be guarded and defensive in future communications with parents.*

Parents are urged to use the empathic listening and responding techniques with their children. Before trying the responding technique, parents should practice empathic listening over a period of approximately a week. While listening to children's statements, parents will find it helpful to ask themselves how they would feel if they were in their children's situation. After becoming familiar with the empathic listening technique, parents should begin to try empathic responses by using the following format:

You feel *(word describing children's feeling)* because *(reason for children's feeling).*

After a few days of following this format, most parents are able to vary the phrasing and sentence structure so the responses sound more natural. Developing skill in this technique requires sensitivity and patience on the part of parents. Because it is such an effective communication technique, however, it is well worth the effort.

Parents' Self-Statements Another highly effective communication technique for parents is the use of self-statements. This method enables parents to communicate briefly, calmly, and firmly to children their feelings about children's undesirable behavior as well as the reasons for those feelings. Self-statements focus on the parents' feelings and point of view and are not accusations, which usually cause children to become defensive. In addition, because methods such as punishing or threatening are not part of this technique, it is an excellent approach for getting children to cooperate in changing their unacceptable behavior.

The following section contains an example of the use of parent's self-statements:

Situation: *Jenny loves to play outside with her friends after school. Although she usually cooperates with her parents in most matters, she rarely cooperates in leaving her playmates to come in for dinner when called. In order to play outside as long as possible, she generally ignores her parents' calls or answers that she is coming, but delays doing so. As a result, her parents are usually so angry with her by the time she finally arrives at the table that the evening meal has become an unpleasant event for the family. Threats and punishment have not brought about any improvement in the situation. Jenny, however, has succeeded in getting much attention from her parents and keeping them very busy with this problem.*

Parent's Self-Statement: *I feel angry when you do not come in from play on time and the whole family is kept waiting for dinner. We need to eat dinner when it is ready.*

If the first self-statement does not bring cooperation, a stronger, more assertive self-statement should be used. It is important that this restatement be made in a calm, positive manner.

Parent's Restatement: *I don't like being ignored, and I feel furious that you stay outside playing after you have been called for dinner. I need you to come in for dinner when you are called.*

LOGICAL AND NATURAL CONSEQUENCES

Parents' self-statements and restatements generally bring about the desired results with children. When they do not, parents must take immediate action. For example, if her parents' use of these techniques did not solve the problem with Jenny, their next action would be to give her the choice of coming in for dinner on time or not eating dinner at all. Nor would she be allowed any snacks during the evening. The choice would be up to Jenny. The family will no longer wait dinner for her, and mealtime can once again be enjoyable for them. Furthermore, Jenny will not continue to receive undue attention for undesirable behavior nor keep her parents occupied with the problem.

This technique is known as a *logical consequence* and is a very constructive child rearing method for matters of ongoing conflict with children. A logical consequence is an action decided upon by parents which is carried out each time children behave in a particular undesirable way. The consequence must be closely related to the offending behavior. In this technique, parents should explain to children in a calm, matter-of-fact way what will happen each time the undesirable behavior occurs. This explanation should be made at a time when no conflict is occurring, and the consequence should not be presented as a threat. Thereafter, whenever the undesirable behavior takes place, parents should calmly carry out the logical consequence, without any recrimination or discussion of the problem. Continued and consistent use of logical consequences usually reduces the number and frequency of parent-child conflicts and helps children learn to take greater responsibility for their own behavior.

The *natural consequences* technique is another helpful method for resolving certain kinds of long-term conflicts between parents and children. A natural consequence is an action resulting from children's behavior, without any intervention by parents. Children are allowed to experience the consequences of their own actions so they may learn to act more responsibly, and parents avoid becoming involved in "no-win" arguments with children.

This technique can be applied to many everyday problems with children. For example, the child who refuses to wear gloves when the weather is cold will soon learn that going without them is uncomfortable and will wear them as needed. Instead of becoming involved in nightly arguments with a child about going to bed on time, parents can use this method of natural consequences. A natural consequence for this situation is for parents to stop arguing about bedtime and let the child experience being tired for a few days. Within several days, going to bed on time will no longer be an issue of conflict.

If used consistently, logical and natural consequences are excellent techniques for changing children's undesirable behavior. They do not require threats or punishment and, thus, are more pleasant and easier to use than most other methods of discipline. These approaches enable parents and children to maintain dignity and respect and, at the same time, help children learn to become increasingly responsible for their actions.

HOLDING FAMILY MEETINGS

Family meetings provide opportunities for parents and children to cooperate in dealing with everyday matters and difficulties which are a part of living together. Participating in weekly family meetings encourages children to take greater personal responsibility for their behavior and for the quality of family life. In addition, conflicts between parents and children and among children are usually reduced.

At these meetings family members make plans and decisions together and also try to find solutions for resolving family issues or problems. All decisions are made by majority vote. When a possible solution for a problem has been chosen, no further discussion about the matter is allowed until the next meeting. Furthermore, each family member must carry out the solution during the coming week. At the following meeting another solution to the problem may be decided upon if the previous one has proved to be ineffective.

This approach for dealing with family matters and problems has the advantage of involving all family members, except babies or very young children, in sharing responsi-

bility for making and carrying out decisions. Relationships among children, family trips and recreation, rules for cooperative family living, and sharing responsibility for household chores are topics which can be considered and resolved at these meetings. These meetings are not intended, however, for making decisions about family matters which only adults should decide.

The following are guidelines for holding family meetings:

- Meetings should be held weekly at the same time on the same day. All family members must agree upon any changes in the meeting time. Also, the meetings should be limited to one hour.
- All family members must be present. If a person is not present at a meeting, he or she must still cooperate in carrying out any decisions made.
- Leadership for the meetings is rotated among family members, even the younger children unless they are of preschool age. Meetings are conducted by democratic principles. Any member may introduce a topic; respect and order are maintained; and decisions are made by majority vote. Assigning blame for a problem, insults, threats, or other similar tactics are not permitted.
- All family members are expected to abide by decisions made at these meetings.
- Matters of concern may be brought up again at the next meeting if any member is dissatisfied with a previous decision.
- A list of decisions made at each meeting should be displayed where it may be easily seen by family members.

HELPING CHILDREN SUCCEED IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Most parents want to help make their children's elementary school years as successful as possible. The following are some suggestions about ways in which parents may help their children learn and develop:

- Stay in close touch with your children's teachers so you may remain informed about what your children are expected to learn as well as their progress and behavior in school.

- Have high, but realistic expectations of your children.
- Encourage them to do their best work and take pride in a job well done. It is important, however, to avoid pressuring them to perform beyond their developmental stage and capabilities.
- Show children that you are interested in their progress in school by talking with them regularly about what they are learning and doing in school and how they feel about school. Look over and discuss with them the books, papers, and other materials they bring home from school.
- Visit your children's schools periodically. Talk with their teachers and arrange to spend some time observing in your children's classrooms. While you are at school, you also may talk with the principal about your children and school programs.
- Insist that your children spend adequate time studying and doing homework as well as reading for pleasure. Because the amount of time necessary for homework and studying may vary according to the grades children are in, check with their teachers to find out how much time is needed for these purposes.
- Provide a quiet, well-lit place for children to study, with a chair and table or desk. Be sure they have paper, pencils, a ruler, a child's dictionary, and other necessary materials suggested by their teachers.
- Guide your children in setting aside the same time each school day for studying and homework. Do not allow them to be inter-

rupted by telephone calls or other activities during this time.

- Help children learn to divide their study time among their subjects and to take responsibility for completing their assignments.
- Provide help with studying and homework when it is needed by explaining concepts, providing examples, and demonstrating methods. Do *not* do children's homework for them.
- After children have completed their studying and homework, go over it with them and discuss what they have learned.
- If children have difficulty with a particular subject or subjects, contact their teachers for assistance as soon as possible to prevent these difficulties from becoming serious barriers to learning.
- Make clear to children their responsibilities for following school rules about student behavior and respect for school property.
- Be sure your children attend school regularly. If they must be absent because of illness or other valid reasons, get their homework and study assignments from school and help them keep up with their work.
- Be involved in the school program by serving as a parent volunteer.
- Be aware of your children's activities at school and outside of school. Make sure that these activities are supervised by responsible adults. A good way to be informed about supervision of out-of-school activities is to stay in touch with parents of your children's friends. This also helps you in responding to children's remarks such as, "Billy's folks are letting him do it. Why can't I?"

GETTING HELP WHEN PROBLEMS ARISE

As children grow, they sometimes experience problems for which they and their parents need help. These problems may involve family situations, such as divorce or illness, or may involve school achievement, relationships with peers and adults, or children's physical and personal development. Whatever the problem may be, parents should encourage children to talk with them about their problems and feelings and should try to help them resolve their difficulties. If parents' efforts to help are not successful, professional help should be sought as soon as possible.

When children are upset and worried, they may not reveal to parents how troubled and in need of help they are. For this reason, parents should remain sensitive to children's unusual behavior which may signal the need for special help. Symptoms such as the following should not be ignored: bedwetting, regression to behavior of previous stages such as thumbsucking or clinging to parents, changes in eating or sleeping habits, resistance to attending school, patterns of aggressive or hostile behavior, frequent sadness or crying, frequent mood changes, listlessness, chronic fatigue, withdrawal, passivity, fear of the dark or of being alone, inappropriate weight loss, and frequent physical complaints which are not typical of the child's particular stage of development.

Help for school-related concerns is available from teachers and principals. If additional services are needed, they will suggest the involvement of other school staff. Information about sources of professional services for problems not related to school generally may be obtained from your children's physician, the principal, the elementary school counselor if your children's school employs one, the school social worker, or visiting teacher.

MUST PARENTS BE PERFECT?

Rearing children is one of the most important and challenging responsibilities most adults ever assume. Yet, it is usually the one for which we receive the least training or formal preparation. In reading the information in this booklet about how to help children learn and grow, some parents may become concerned about their ability to carry out the many suggestions which have been made. They may wonder if it is possible for them to be *perfect parents.*

All parents make mistakes sometimes in rearing children. If children's basic needs for security, love, understanding, acceptance, competence, and respect are met most of the time, they will not suffer lasting damage from parents' occasional errors. Parents are encouraged to enjoy their children and use common sense and adult judgment in rearing them. Parents also are encouraged to seek assistance for difficult child rearing concerns and to take advantage of parent training programs offered in their schools and communities.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES IN VIRGINIA PUBLICATIONS

- **ABOUT THE PRESCHOOL YEARS, BOOK 1** For parents of young children who will serve as their children's first teachers and educational decision makers.

  Includes information about child development; childrearing techniques; helping young children grow and learn; preschool education; and public education in Virginia.

- **ABOUT THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL YEARS, BOOK 2** For parents of children entering elementary school.

  Includes information about elementary school programs; school staff and services; studying and homework; child development; childrearing techniques; and helping children to be successful students.

- **ABOUT THE MIDDLE SCHOOL YEARS, BOOK 3** For students completing their final year in elementary school and for parents wanting to help them plan for middle school.

  Includes information about middle school programs; school staff and services; studying and homework; career exploration; early adolescent development; childrearing techniques; and helping middle school children to be successful students.

- **ABOUT HIGH SCHOOL, BOOK 4** For seventh-grade students and their parents for use in planning for high school.

  Includes information about high school programs; graduation requirements; diplomas; studying and homework; special programs and activities; careers; and helping high school students to succeed.

- **AFTER HIGH SCHOOL, BOOK 5** For high school juniors and their parents for use in planning for further education and careers after high school graduation.

  Includes information about Virginia's colleges and universities; community and two-year colleges; vocational-occupational programs; adult and continuing education; General Educational Development (GED) Program; military service; financial aid; careers; and sources of additional information.

Copies of these booklets will be available for use at the following locations throughout Virginia: guidance offices and libraries at all public elementary, middle/junior high/intermediate, and high schools, and public libraries. Copies of Book 1 will be distributed through hospitals in Virginia to parents of new babies.

For information, please contact: Public Information Office
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